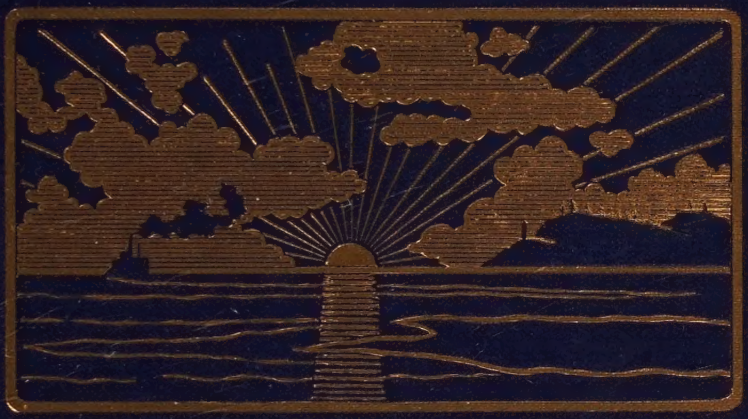

THE GOLD-GATED WEST

SONGS AND POEMS

BY SAMUEL L. SIMPSON

Mr. & Mrs. J. C. Roberts.

The Gold-Gated West

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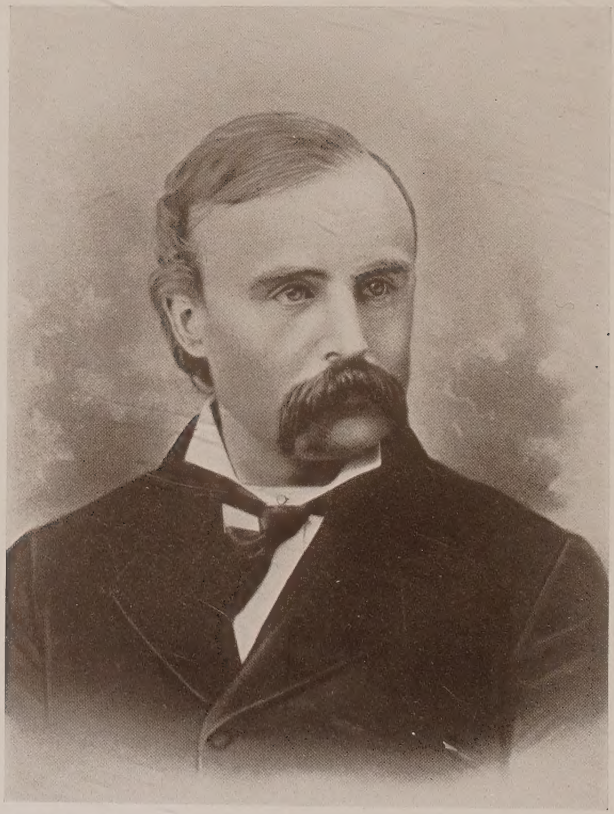

Sam. L. Simpson.

The Gold-Gated West

Songs and Poems

By Samuel L. Simpson

Edited, with an Introductory Preface, by

W. T. BURNEY

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TO JULIA

O she was fair as a red-lipped lily,
A rosy marble of moulded song.

Beauty is regnant in all God's looms.
Even the thistle has purple blooms.

PREFACE

Samuel L. Simpson, the author of this collection of poems, was born in the State of Missouri on the 10th day of November, 1845, and was the second son of Hon. Ben Simpson and Nancy Cooper Simpson. In 1846 Ben Simpson organized and conducted an emigrant train across the plains to Oregon. The trials, hardships and triumphs of that great undertaking are most interestingly told in the poem entitled "The Campfires of the Pioneers."

Sam Simpson, as he was familiarly known, was taught the alphabet by his mother at the age of four years, from copies traced in the ashes on the hearthstone of their pioneer home. He attended the country schools of the time and was reputed precocious in his earlier life. He has left one gem, a reminiscence of his school-days, "The Lost Path."

At the age of fifteen he was employed in the sutler's store, owned by his father, on the Grande Ronde Indian Reservation, a military post at that time. Here the precocious boy met and became the flattered protégé of Grant, Sheridan, and others of that post. General Sheridan presented him a copy

of Byron's poems, which he prized very highly and read with great interest.

He entered, at sixteen, the Willamette University, at Salem, Oregon, from which he was graduated in the class of '65. He immediately took up the study of the law, and passed the required examination for admission to practice in 1866, but, not being of the required age, he was not admitted until 1867.

His prospects in the practice were reasonably good, though his characteristic timidity qualified his deserved success. In 1870 he abandoned the practice of law, assumed the editorial charge of the "Corvalis Gazette," and entered on a general journalistic career, which he pursued through the rest of his life.

In 1868 he married Miss Julia Humphrey, to whom these poems are dedicated. She was noted for her beauty and enrapturing voice in music—his "sweet-throated thrush," of whom he writes:

> Lurlina, Heaven flies not
> From souls it once has blessed;
> First love may fade, but dies not,
> Though wounded and distressed.
>
> "Though after-days deride us
> With Hymen's broken rings,
> We know that once beside us
> An angel furled his wings."

And, though after-days did deride him with Hymen's broken rings, he never faltered or wavered in his devotion to his first and only love. There were born

to Mr. Simpson and wife two sons, Eugene H. and Claude L.

Samuel L. Simpson died in the city of Portland on the 14th day of June, 1900, and was buried in Lonefir Cemetery.

Simpson has been classed by his Western admirers with Burns and Poe, and in many of his poems he portrays that keen appreciation of the grandeur and beauty of nature and that matchless rhythmic style which certainly render the comparison not uncomplimentary to those immortal bards. And he too, as they, labored within the bonds of a habit that has no kindred seal of woe, and to this limitation was attributable the failures he so bitterly bemoans in the poems " Quo Me, Bacche? ", " Wreck," and others of like sentiment.

The Angel of Silence has now brushed him with his wings and the pining is hushed. Life's stormy seas have baffled and shipwrecked many a divine genius, who bravely faced the gale with little thought of anchor or the safe bestowal of his sail; to whom the flag at the peak was more important than a strong hand at the helm. Such a sailor was Sam Simpson; but he has left us many a beautiful strain of music, caught from the song of wind and tide; many a picture glowing with the gold of sunset or the rose of blossoming spring. We, who knew him best, know that he never reached the achievement

that was possible to his talents. His poems breathe rather of pathos and shadow than of joy, for they take their tint from a mind oftentimes world weary. And we who knew him will judge him gently, and prize the treasures he brought home from many voyages of fancy, in air and sea and sky.

W. T. Burney.

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SALUTATION

Where the lords of the mountains are lifted
  In a lustre of silver and pearl,
And the shadows of ages are drifted
  In the banners the forests unfurl,—
Where the Oregon's gathering waters
  Go down to the strife of the sea,
And Willamette meanders and loiters
  By many a rose-clustered lea,—
In the regions of Hesper, the star-lands,
  Abloom in the gold-gated West,
I have crowned a wild muse with these garlands—
  Some rue-leaves along with the rest;—
If perchance in the chaplets I bring her
  There is something your heart will prolong,
Then to me is the joy of the singer,
  And to you the delight of the song.

Poems on Nature

BEAUTIFUL WILLAMETTE

From the Cascades' frozen gorges,
  Leaping like a child at play,
Winding, widening through the valley,
  Bright Willamette glides away;
    Onward ever,
    Lovely River,
Softly calling to the sea,
    Time, that scars us,
    Maims and mars us,
Leaves no track or trench on thee.

Spring's green witchery is weaving
  Braid and border for thy side;
Grace forever haunts thy journey,
Beauty dimples on thy tide;
Through the purple gates of morning
  Now thy roseate ripples dance,
Golden then, when day, departing,
  On thy waters trails his lance.
    Waltzing, flashing,
    Tinkling, splashing,
Limpid, volatile, and free—
    Always hurried
    To be buried
In the bitter, moon-mad sea.

In thy crystal deeps inverted
  Swings a picture of the sky,
Like those wavering hopes of Aidenn,
  Dimly in our dreams that lie;
Clouded often, drowned in turmoil,
  Faint and lovely, far away—
Wreathing sunshine on the morrow,
  Breathing fragrance round to-day.
    Love would wander
    Here and ponder.
Hither poetry would dream;
    Life's old questions,
    Sad suggestions,
Whence and whither? throng thy stream.

On the roaring waste of ocean
  Shall thy scattered waves be tossed,
'Mid the surge's rhythmic thunder
  Shall thy silver tongues be lost.
O! thy glimmering rush of gladness
  Mocks this turbid life of mine!
Racing to the wild Forever
  Down the sloping paths of Time.
    Onward ever,
    Lovely River,
Softly calling to the sea;
    Time that scars us,
    Maims and mars us,
Leaves no track or trench on thee.

SNOWDRIFT

Tenderly, patiently falling, the snow
Whitens the gloaming, and in the street's glow
Spectrally beautiful, drifts to the earth—
Pale in life's brightness, and still in its mirth;
Swarming and settling like spirits of bees
Blown from the blossoms of song-haunted trees—
Blown with the petals of dreams we have known,
Rosy with heart dews of days that are gone.

Spirits of flowers, and spectres of bees—
Emblems of toil and its guerdon are these—
Thrown to us silently—cold, and so fair—
From the gardens that gleam in the regions of air;
As if the high heavens that gathered our sighs
Wept for the promise the future denies;—
Dreamingly lifted the glowing bouquet,
Sweet with life's longing, and tossed it away!

Soft as the touch of the white-handed moon
Wreathing the world in a twilight of June,
Gently and lovingly hastens the snow—
Weaving a veil for dead nature below;
Kissing the stains from the hoof-beaten street,
Folding the town in a slumber so sweet,
Surely the stars, in their helmets of gold,
Pensively linger and love to behold.

Thus our endeavor may fail of its prize—
Hope and ambition drop cold from our skies;
Yet on the pathway, so lonely and drear,
Rugged with failure and clouded by fear,
Spirits of beauty come out of defeat,
Cover life's sorrows and shield its retreat—
Healing the heart as the fall of the snow
Brightens the darkness of winter below.

O, when the Angel of Silence has brushed
Me with his wings, and this pining is hushed,
Tenderly, graciously, light as the snow,
Fall the kind mention of all that I know—
Words that will cover and whiten the sod,
Folding the life that was given of God;—
Wayward may be, and persistent to rove—
Restful, at last, in the glamour of love!

AUTUMN LEAVES

Oh, droop, sky of Autumn, chaste azure-browed
Queen—
Droop and whisper the leaves a good-bye!
For thy cloud-woven bridal-veil decks thee, I ween,
As the bride of bold Winter, sweet sky;
To his gloom-haunted fortunes, and cold couch of
storms,
To his frowns and rude buffets, and ice-bristling
arms,
We resign thee in sadness—good-bye!

All gracefully, tenderly, ever so near—
Like a beautiful maiden that grieves—
The pale spouse of Winter, on forest and mere,
Stoops to toy with the death-painted leaves;
Flaming crimson, warm scarlet, to match gold and brown,
Like a rich, tattered sunset, fall fluttering down
From the hand of the maiden that grieves!

A desolate peace is abroad o'er the world,
And the heart neither laughs now nor cries;
But the banners of Summer are gloomily furled;
Leaves and lips have no language but sighs:
While a noise as of shrouds that are trailing is heard
Where the crisp robes of Autumn are rustled and stirred,
But the heart neither laughs now nor cries.

Oh, bright, beauteous leaves—how they glittered and tossed
In the sheen of the long Summer's day,
When the warm, wanton zephyrs, the meadows across,
Came to join them in amorous play.
But the meadows are dismal, and barren and cold,
And the hoarse winds that rove them grown ruthless and bold,
Since the lapse of the long Summer's day.

Oh, green, glossy leaves, how they quivered and sighed,
In wild dreams of the wonderful night—
When the moon like a silvery barge on the tide,
Dashed her prow through the lilies of light,
And the lass and her lover, at trysting beneath,
Twined their beautiful love with a mingling of breath,
And were part of the wonderful night.

Alas for the leaves! dipped in dyes of the morn—
Crimson-plashed in the life of the year—
Oh! their clustering grace is dishevelled and torn,
And they scatter, distracted with fear:
And no haunt is too meek for their wearisome quest,
As they drift on forever in dreary unrest—
Plashed and stained in the life of the year.

Thus loved ones and lovely, though honored the most,
Are cast down from the heights they adorn:
Yet lovely, though smitten, are drifted and tossed
To be in a pitiless scorn;
Thus our hopes, bravely hung on life's tempest-blown tree,
Bloom and blanch in our dreams of a glorious "To Be,"
But are torn from the heights they adorn!

AFTER HARVEST

From his porch, the Northern farmer
  Looks across the trampled fields,
And his strong heart flushes warmer
  With the joy his conquest yields.

For his boys have come, a glory
  On the sheaves their toil has won—
Heroes with a brighter story
  Than the pallid Spartan son.

Peace has drawn her azure curtain
  'Round the mountain's pillared might,
And the river, slow, uncertain,
  Loiters in the yellow light.

Ruby tints have touched the apples,
  Swelling clusters bend the vine;
And the waiting angel dapples
  All the woods with crimson sign.

Falling, falling, softer, sweeter,
  Fades the mellow harvest song;
And the dreamy days are fleeter
  And the restful nights are long.

MOLOKAI

[One of the Hawaiian Islands where the lepers are confined.]

I.

An island at anchor in blue-bosomed seas
  Is evermore haunting my soul like a dream,
And the mystical grace of the slender palm-trees,
That lift their light plumes in the indolent breeze,
Recurs in my thought, like the strange thread of gold
That ran in the woof of the weaver of old;
  And still shadows lengthen and smooth billows gleam.

II.

Gray peaks that were tossed in the torture of fire
  Stand bare in the sun, and heroic with scars
And sculptures of battle, and anguish and ire,
That say in derision, "Be strong and aspire!"
Bright seas, bitter-hearted, strike wild on the shore
And sing their old anthem, "Deplore and deplore
  For all that is sorrowful under the stars!"

III.

And touched by the moonlight, their sad faces glow,
  While low, like the wail of the wind in the pines,
Their fitful songs quiver, and broken and slow,
Seem lost in the beat of the surges below;

As o'er the gilt waters, dream-sweet and afar,
Their hearts travel outward, where, lost like a star
That fell from their heaven, Owyhee reclines.

IV.

They buy not, they sell not—the joy and the care
Of living and toiling are theirs nevermore;
But, lonesome and weary, and calm with despair,
They sing their strange songs and sit braiding their hair,
Till day has gone down, and the curtain of light
Has passed from the tenderer vision of night,
And dim shadows move on the silvering shore.

V.

What reck they of battle or council, or all
The hope or endeavor of laboring time!
The golden fruit ripens, the white loon will call
Where the broad wave is richest and all things befall
That stricken souls need in a bountiful isle,
Caressed by the sun and bedight with his smile,
The blossom and crown of the tropical clime.

VI.

And thus, while the scheming and passionate world
Is building and wrecking, and building anew,
A strange ship at anchor, her canvas all furled,
While suns set in purple, and moon is impearled,
Lies low Molokai, and the indolent palm

Scarce flutters a plume, for the days are so calm,
And Pale Death her grim Captain—pale lepers her crew.

VII.

An empire of death! O, the world has not known,
In all its great story of trouble and wrong,
Another like Molokai, drear and alone,
Where Pluto, the hope-slayer, sits on his throne
And rules as a tyrant, unchecked in his pride,
With none to dispute him and none to deride,
And never a traitor in all the sad throng!

VIII.

The red suns wheel over and drown in the sea;
Like clustering lilies the white stars decay;
Moons blossom, and wither; but windward or lee
No rising sail beckons or bids them be free,
Till low-sailing sea-mists, unmasted and pale,
Drift over the palm-trees, and drop within hail
Of the sorrowing spirits, and waft them away.

AN OUT-OF-DOOR SONG

Come with me, oh, you world-weary,
To the haunts of thrush and veery,
To the cedar's dim cathedral,
And the palace of the pine,
Let the soul within you capture

Something of the wild-wood rapture,
Something of the epic passion
Of that harmony divine.

Down the pathway let us follow
Through the hemlocks to the hollow,
To the woven, vine-wood thickets
In the twilight vague and old,
While the streamlet, winding after,
Is a thread of silv'ry laughter,
And the boughs above hint softly
Of the melodies they hold.

Through the forest, never caring
What the way our feet are faring,
We shall hear the wild birds revel
In the labyrinth of tune,
And on mossy carpets tarry
In His temples cool and airy,
Hung with silence, and the splendid
Amber tapestry of noon.

Leave the hard heart of the city
With its poverty of pity,
Leave the folly and the fashion
Wearing out the faith of men;
Breathe the breath of life blown over
Upland meadows white with clover,
And with childhood's clearer vision,
See the face of God again.

NOTE—This poem was inserted at the instance of Rev. Wallace R. Stuble, sanctioned by Hon. Robert A. Miller, Hon. John Gill and a number of others of Portland, Oregon, who believed it to be Simpson's work. Since publication we find that it was included in a volume recently issued by Whitaker & Ray-Wiggin, of San Francisco, California, in a collection of Mr. Herbert Bashford's poems. As we do not wish to dispute his authorship the verses will be omitted in all subsequent editions of these poems.—Ed.

HOOD

White despot of the wild Cascades!
I greet thee, as the twilight shades
  Drop like a curtain from the wall,
Where sheaves of sunlight, burning yet
On frosted tower and minaret,
  Portray thee, reigning over all!

And southward, with a scarlet glow
Upon his gleaming crest of snow,
  Old Jefferson nods thee good-night;
And further yet, like fallen stars,
The Sisters, linked with sunset bars,
  Are beautiful in braided light.

O Hood! the quiver of the storm
Has hung upon thy steadfast form
  When lightnings wreathed thy brow with fire;
And Night has crushed his tempest wings
Against thy granite anchorings
  And left no record of his ire.

The centuries which o'er thee tramp,
Like spectres to their shadow camp,
  Have left thee neither scar nor stain;
The gliding dimples of the sea—
The stars' sweet-eyed eternity—
  Do not a lovelier youth maintain.

The crimson mantle of the Dawn
Is first around thy shoulders drawn,
When all the vales are dim with shade;
And sunset's last and ling'ring ray,
Dropt by the weary hand of Day,
Upon thy regal brow doth fade.

Thus memory and hope are wrought
Upon thee, as the sculptor's thought
Enwreathes the pallid forms of stone;—
And Godward, like a prophet's prayer,
Thou scal'st the heaven's windy stair—
Imperial, serene, alone!

And what an empire! rough and shorn,
By old disorders ploughed and torn,
Sunward the mighty realms expand;
In broidery of wood and mead
Willamette's green mosaics lead
Westward to ocean's misty strand.

Lodged in thy helmet's diamond clasp
The star of conquest rests at last,
Above the tempest's gloomy track,—
Its rays like swords of triumph crossed
Upon the mound so newly tossed—
The pioneer's last bivouac.

A pulse of fire, on nerves of steel,
Has reached the wilderness;—we feel
The glorious heart-beat of the world,

And in thy shadow, Hood, the light
Of western progress glimmers bright,
  Its bannered eagles all unfurled!

With mutterings of doubt and fear,
And worn with battle long and drear,
  The pagan spirit of the Past
Stalks through the silence, gloomy-faced,
A wand'rer in his templed waste,
  Conscious of God and truth at last!

Already round the brooding Sphinx
The Eastern desert swells and sinks,
  And slowly shrouds that weary face;
And stormy spectres sweep the land
With dry and rustling robes of sand,
  And whisper of a perished race.

But still thy hand, in crystal mail,
Here flashing to the clouds, will hail
  The sheen of Freedom's golden crest,
And where the sea tides leap and shine,
Along the new world's border line,
  Proclaim the Empire of the West!

A WINTER FLOWER

A diffident plant, that no one knew,
Grew close to the rose's place;
But never, ah, never, the sweet summer through,
When the lily and rose drank the light and dew,
Was it crowned with a blossom's grace.

But soberly green, exhaling the while
A subtle and faint perfume,
It seemed like the shadow that ends the smile,
The sorrow in ambush when joys beguile,
In the riot of summer's bloom.

Then the morning came of a dreary day,
And the winds of winter blew,
And they wafted an odor of dull decay,
For the rose and the lily had gone their way,
As the fairest are fain to do.

And the stormy maple beside the gate
Like a wailing minstrel sung;
For the fleeting gold of its royal state,
Blown hard by the vandal winds of fate,
In tattered banners hung.

But, lo! in a glory of gorgeous bloom
Stood the plant that was sombre green,

When blossoms of summer no more illume,
Like a torch of light in the garden's gloom
It rose in symbolic sheen.

And I thought of the friend that came to me
In the dusk of unhappy days,
From the rush of the false that turned to flee
With the fleetness of fickle inconstancy,
And still at my side delays.

It is thus the wealth of human hearts
In a dim disuse may lie
Till the tempest wings, when our June departs,
The hidden world into blossom starts
To brighten the dreary sky.

It is thus that our faith in man and God,
Untried in our summer hours,
Like the plant that blooms in a rain-swept sod,
May wake at the touch of the chastening rod,
And life have its winter flowers.

SULLIED WATERS

Behold the living fountain's home—
Among the mysteries that guard
The purple stairways heavenward,
Where crested peaks that rise and reach
By minaret and spire and dome
Of templed song and sculptured speech!

Here Dian dips her golden keel,
  Low sailing for the western sea
  In maiden-mild serenity,
And diamond wreaths of drifted snow
Blush with the beauty they reveal,
In sunset's holy after-glow.

Above the tempest's murky rings,
  Within the silver mist that weaves
  The tapestry of summer eves,
The fountain, like a liquid star,
Superbly from its prison springs
And greets its kingdom from afar.

Away and down a minstrel white—
  Await resplendent—beam and braid
  Of beaded swirl and white cascade,
And soon the gleaming slopes are past
The pines appear, a band of might,
That sway and chant in every blast.

Lean over it, O solemn pines,
  Clasp hands and whisper dreams and fears
  To darken all the coming years,
It gives you back the minor key
That thrills in music's sweetest lines—
The mystery of minstrelsy.

And far, in fragrant canyon gloom
  The golden murmurs rise and fall
  In symphony and madrigal.

A thread of laughter rippling through
The changes of the sounding loom—
Yet something still to mourn and rue.

Through the delightful mountain land,
  A gypsy route, as fair as free,
  A careless wandering to the sea,
Through forests old and glad and green,
With cliffs and crags on either hand,
And gems of rosy vale between.

Away where boys, at country plays,
  Send happy clamor down the breeze
  On swarded slopes and sunny leas,—
Where maidens dress their wavy hair
With crimson buds and tasseled sprays,
And all the world is young and fair.

By village, farm and tricksy town,
  The widening waters play and pass,
  Swinging the magic azure glass
Where all life's shadows, sad and sweet,
From ruby dawn to twilight brown,
Are still reflected, fixed or fleet.

Rose gardens and sweet clover fields
  Breathe over it a rich perfume,
  And Sabbath bells and bells of doom
Mix with it music and are part
Of all the river gains or yields
Of empire o'er the human heart.

At last, before the city gates
  The broad and splendid waters roll,
  But silent—songless as a soul
The fates have tossed and sorrows stained,
Till never more a dream elates,
Or any seeming good is gained.

Across the seething, sullied tide
  The wild lights flicker, and the roar
  Of commerce sweeps from shore to shore
With clang of iron, shriek of steam,
And through it all the still ships glide,
Like spectres in a cruel dream.

So rank with nameless slough and slime,
  'Twere well to pass with muffled brow,
  O river, dark and secret now;—
To pass, and give no sigh or clew
To any damning deed of crime
That shrouds thee in this cloudy hue.

The dead, the dead, the awful dead
  That swirl and swirl in eddies dark
  By clammy wharf and creaking bark!
It is a fate but partly told,
'Twere well to leave it all unsaid—
And battle on for love and gold.

But lo, the tide resistlessly
  Hath borne us on, and hark! I hear
  The tread of columned legions near:

It is the ocean's martial throng—
The bridal music of the sea—
  The world's wide waters, bold and strong.

Ten thousand flashing silver plumes
  Sweep by the ocean gates, and far
  Resounds the thunder of the war,
In rhythmic cadence, vast and deep,
And o'er the squadroned waves the fumes
Of splendid conflict toss and sweep.

And by those misted, stormy gates
  The sullied waters pass and part,
  Like old affections of the heart
That have abided to the end—
Then pass and part to other fates,
While stars return and suns ascend.

The salt sad sea gives back its dead;
  O turbid river, wail no more
  The passing pageant of the shore;
Again to April's mystic bow
And sunset roses, warm and red,
Our eyes shall turn—and we shall know!

The crested clouds of pearl and gold
  And all the kingly pomp that waits
  At morning round the crystal gates,
Will be but souvenirs of thee;
The dewdrops in the flowers' fold,
Thy jewels, rescued from the sea!

THE SISTERS

[Three snow peaks of the Cascade Range.]

Northward and Southward, vapor barred,
Shasta and Hood keep watch and ward
  Lone as forgotten stars that lean
  On shields of high heraldic sheen—
Biding the years and yet on guard.

Highland and lowland, green and gray,
Here sweeps the middle realm away—
  A thousand keen crags lifted through
  The forests' folded robes of blue,
Misted in night or bathed in day.

A thousand vales like jewels flung
The revels of the hills among,
  Rich with intaglios, rife with gleams
  Of lakes impearled, and twining streams
Fair as Virgilian verse has sung.

And lo, in central tumult throned,
Like Queens some ancient race has owned,
  The Sisters Three, with maiden brows
  Enwreathed with saintly vestal vows,
Arise in beauty azure zoned!

Forever, on the bold Cascades,
Above the purple canyon shades,
  The phalanxed firs and tragic peaks—
  Tossed high in nature's stormy freaks,
They weave and wind their mystic braids.

Their pyramidic calm the storms
Assail in vain, their wreathen forms,
  Typic of virtues that arise
  In our heart-breeding agonies,
Unmoved in midst of wild alarms.

Serene, in silver robes of snow,
They watch the wild years ebb and flow,
  And tell their crystal rosaries
  Through the long vigil fate decrees
As changing fortunes come and go.

Morning and evening garland them,
And starlight weaves a diadem
  All tremulous with lilies pale,
  And sibyl shadows, like a veil,
Drop softly to their mantle's hem.

THE LOST PATH

In the plaintive light of the past it lies
Where young dreams garland the gentle skies,
Wayward and winding, smooth and cool,
The foot-worn path to the country school!

Along the lane where the orchard trees
Were bright with blossoms and brave with bees,
Across, where the white-crowned clover kneeled,
To the rustling ranks of the richer field:
And out where the oaks and maples made
A woven mystery of light and shade,
It dipped and dallied, and mocked at rule,
And the drowsy tasks of the country school.

Now swerving wide on a ruthless raid,
Where the merry squirrels romped and played,
And pausing long where the eagle's nest
Was ever a dream of knightly quest,
Then away through the rainbow clouds of flowers
That tangled the feet of the laughing hours;—
There was little thought of the desk and stool,
On that winding way to the country school.

But look, where the pathway climbs the stile
Some one has waited a weary while;
She has decked her hair with a bramble rose,
And a sweet, shy light in her brown eye glows.
"It is late," you sigh, but you loiter yet
Tho' the gossiping blackbirds flounce and fret
In the golden willows beside the pool,
Like the scolding crones of the country school.

Alas, Life's river is swirling fast,
But the rose has tinted the dewy Past,
And up from its crimson mists at times
The winding and wayward pathway climbs

In the old, wild way, with a careless art,
To loiter and curve in a fading heart,
In the old wild way as smooth and cool
Is all that is left of the country school.

OREGON IN SUMMER

Oh, sweet was young Endymion's dream,
  Beside the lilies and the lake,
But over thee thy white peaks gleam,
  And thine is sweeter all awake;
For thou may'st dream and yet not sleep,
  Fair warden of the western gate,
With freedom's spear and shield to keep
  Till all the clouds of war abate.

Along the Cascades' rugged walls
  Thy crystal'd towers grandly rise,
And Shasta to St. Helen's calls
  The glory of thy young emprise.
Thy mountains loom in purple haze,
  The deep green forests billow wild,
And in the fields glad harvest days
  The golden sheaves have richly piled.

Like some vast army plumed and mailed,
  Storming its way in fierce crusade,
Columbia's waters, flushed and paled
  By joy and sorrow, sun and shade,

Roll to the sea; by forests dim,
Through resonant cathedral aisles,
Responding to the mighty hymn
Of triumphs for a thousand miles.

Bronzed in the mellow sun, o'er
Weird crags that swim in stainless blue,
Thy stern-eyed eagles launch and soar,
Like faith, that lifts our hopes anew.
And what an empire they behold!
Still rich in fresh barbaric charms,
As radiant in summer gold
Each scene with deeper color warms.

Beyond the mountain range that stands
Between the valleys and the sea,
The soft surf beats the gleaming sands
And weaves mist-wreaths eternally;
Swept inward by each breeze that blows,
The vapory garlands drift serene,
And richer crimson stains the rose
While woods and vales are vernal green.

As still thy calm, bronze eagles wheel,
And hold their realm in upper sky;
They see the bright Willamette steal
From frozen caves and wander by,
A glorious dream of youth and grace,
Among the roses and the wheat,
And cities fair a sturdy race
Has builded up beyond defeat.

They see the smoking censer swung,
  Before the matchless river's falls,
As if to hush the murmur wrung
  By stern old ocean's stormy calls;
And lo! on some bold height they see
  The antlered elk in royal pose,
Reviewing with proud majesty
  The vales where fragrant summer glows.

And may we not conceive that Pan,
  The god the Galilean drove
From all the ancient haunts of man
  And ev'ry sacred grot and grove,
Is here enthroned with all his band
  Of nymphs and satyrs and the rest—
That here the dreams of fairy land
  The building of a state have blest?

Where the mottled pheasant in sweet shade
  Awaits the passing of the noon,
And quails in knightly crests arrayed
  Are straying by the brooklet's rune;
Where mountain trout, with steely gleams,
  Flits over pebbly, gold-flecked sands,
The nymphs are singing to the streams
  And list'ning for their god's commands.

Oh, land of streams, whose silvery braid
  So graces these dear vales of ours,
And has a fairy garden made,
  Enriched with glowing fruits and flowers;

Oh, land of peaks and woods; may we
By Hood's stern brow, St. Helen's dome,
Be sure to keep good faith with thee;
And may God bless our mountain home!

THE FIRST FALL OF THE SNOW

In misty silence, dim and gray,
The haggard world last evening lay.

There were no birds at vesper call,
No garlands on the western wall;

No crimson kisses of the light
To warm the falling fringe of night,

As lowering his shield, the sun
Withdrew at once, and day was done.

The pines in plumy phalanx stood,
Embattled monarchs of the wood;

The oak, with stript and knotted arm
Invoked the challenge of the storm;

And asps and alders, by the streams,
Were lost in lonesome summer dreams.

A moment thus, in dark tableau,
You read the spectral sign of woe,

And then beside the roseate hearth
Forgot it all in ease and mirth.

You saw the ruby sparkles bloom,
And fade again in ashen gloom,

As memories, within your heart,
Like flowers flashed and fell apart,—

And all the while, with muffled tread,
The winds foretold the change that sped.

Perhaps in wakeful mood, last night,
You heard a whisper, low and light —

The sound of wings that touched and passed
The vibrant panes of window glass —

The rustle of a robe that kissed
The roof as soft as trailing mist.

'Twas then a flaky lustre fell
In starry woof of asphodel,

And gloss of diamond, foam of pearl,
Inwrought in many an airy whirl,—

As if, in hyacinthine bowers,
Some sweeter anthem shook the flowers,

Like petaled moonlight o'er the globe—
A gleaming, soft, and magic robe.

And so, at morn, you wake to see
Our earth a lovely mystery—

A bridal orb, a blossomed star,
Redeemed of every woe and scar;

And yet this saintly crown shall pass
In golden bloom and tasselled grass,

When all the rippled streams shall sing
The coronation of the Spring.

O! thus in sorrow's wintry night
Is shed the blessing of our blight!

Thus in the watches of despair
The angels seek us unaware,

And all our clouded griefs above
Are falling in a wreath of love.

Thus on a pallid realm of thought
The miracle of grace is wrought,

And shining halcyons of peace
Stoop from the storm with sweet surcease.

And thus, refreshed in wreathen sleep,
Some happy dream the soul will keep,

Till dreams shall blossom into deed
And feast the world's eternal need.

THE OREGON CHINOOK

Where Æolus, king of the murmuring caves,
When his chariot stands on the gleaming waves,
Is bleak of soul, and his lips are curled
With a withering curse for the wintry world,
He beckons the crisp-haired East to his side
And bids her harness her steeds and ride.

We hear the moan of rushing wheels,
And the drip of the floating cloud congeals
And is dashed in the pallid swirl of snow
Across the face of the earth below
'Til its mirth is stilled, and its joys are fled,
And the stark fields lie like the sheeted dead.

For she trails a shroud from her icy spear,
Dusted with jewels, but oh, so dear!
It were better to sleep in the bare brown mould
Than to lie in the sweep of its sheeny fold.
She has bound the streams with a crystal chain,
Fettered the hills and their sweet hopes slain!

Then weirdly over the forest rings
A shrill lament for its crownless kings,
And the bannered march of the summer days,
When joy was duty and life was praise,
While over the chimney, at night, we hear
The voices of sorrow and wrath and fear.

But the East rides on, and a gale of death
Is blown with her dry and frosty breath,
As the chilling blood to the heart returns,
Where the crimson fire of life still burns,
And our souls grow bitter, and cold and keen,
Miserly and shrunken, and pale and lean.

For the tradesmen fold their idle hands,
And far on the Wasco pasture lands
The hungering herd can never stir
From the shade of the pine and juniper;
And the gainful traffic of men is dead
And the children of labor must wail for bread.

Alas! in that wizen and rueful time
The bells of affection are out of chime,
While no more at eve on his golden stair
Does love to the happy tryst repair,
And never a bosom feels the glow
That coaxes the orange buds to blow.

But O, when out of the languid South
And sweet as the breath of a rosy mouth,
The Chinook arises and northward blows
Across the shield of the gleaming snows,
How wakes the world that it breathes upon,
Wakes life and laughter in Oregon!

O! rich and warm, as if it came
From an isle where the dark red poppies flame,
And the hazy Indian summer dreams

O'er the tents that are pitched by the winding
streams,
And the Indian maidens, singing low,
Are weaving a floral charm they know.

There is little wonder that it has caught
A name with these wayward fancies fraught,
What wonder her lingering kisses, wet
With the dews of the rose and the violet,
Should charm from our fields the wintry pall
And revive the blossomy hopes of all.

Let us rear a statue of passing grace
In every Oregon market place,
An Indian maiden with midnight hair
Blown back from her bosom brown and bare,
And the glow of summer in all her look,
As the type of the glorified Chinook.

THE FEAST OF APPLE BLOOM

When the sky is a dream of violet
And the days are rich with gold,
And the satin robe of the earth is set
With the jewels wrought of old;
When the woodlands wave in choral seas
And the purple mountains loom,
It is heaven to come with birds and bees
To the feast of apple bloom.

For the gabled roof of the home arose
O'er the sheen of the orchard snow,
And is still my shrine when storms repose
And the gnarly branches blow;
While the music of childhood's singing heart,
That was lost in the backward gloom,
May be heard when the robins meet and part
At the feast of the apple bloom.

And I think, when the trees display a crown
Like the gleam of a resting dove,
Of a face that was framed in tresses brown
And aglow with a mother's love;
At the end of the orchard path she stands,
While I laugh at my manhood's doom,
As my spirit flies with lifted hands
To the feast of apple bloom.

When the rainbow paths of faded skies
Are restored with the diamond rain,
And the joys of my wasted paradise
Are returning to earth again,
It is sadder than death to know how brief
Are the smiles that the dead assume;
But a moment allowed, a flying leaf
From the feast of apple bloom.

But a golden arch forever shines
In the dim and darkening past,
Where I stand again as day declines,
And the world is bright and vast;

For the glory that lies along the lane
  Is endeared with sweet perfume
And the world is ours, and we are twain
  At the feast of apple bloom.

She was more than fair in the wreath she wore
  Of the creamy buds and blows,
And she comes to me from the speechless shore
  When the flowering orchard glows;
And I sigh for the dreams so sweet and swift,
  That are laid in a sacred tomb—
Yet are nothing at last but fragrant drift
  From the feast of apple bloom.

FALLS OF THE WILLAMETTE

Here wheels the thunder-breathing steed,
As if in dread to stay and heed
  A grander pageant than his own,
Wild waters whirl in cresting spray,
Fair as the fragrant wreaths of May,
  And loud with laughter, song and moan.

Yonder embattled firs around,
Chant high above, in martial sound,
  The pæans of the marching years;
And here a dark, historic cliff,
Writ o'er with many a hieroglyph,
  Echoes and answers, leans and hears.

And lo! Within the surge and roar,
Scarfed with a rainbow evermore,
The pallid priestess of the flood,
Swinging her censer to and fro,
As swift suns wheel and soft moons glow
Aloof, through lapsing time has stood.

The tented and the tawny bands
Whose camp-smoke curled along these sands,
And climbed and crowned the rocky shore,
To murmurless deep seas and pale
Have passed, with gray and slanting sail,
Forgetful of the spear and oar.

So now beside this stormy gate,
Pilgrims of brighter visage wait,
To rest in turn beneath the sod:—
Yet shall this melody be rolled
For aye, these voices manifold
The echo of a changeless God!

THE MAPLE AT THE GATE

Like a goddess in sorrow dishevelled,
October sits grieving alone
By the rivers where beauty has revelled
In the odorous days that are gone;
A fillet of scarlet leaves lonely
Surrounds the ambrosial hair
That is flowing upon her profusely
And crowns her all womanly fair.

The scent of dead leaves and dead roses
  Yet lingers where rapture was born,
But a mystical whisper imposes
  A silence so deep and forlorn:
For the music is done, and the dancers
  Have gone their mysterious ways
To weep or to sleep, but no answers
  Return to the last that delays.

The hearts that have swelled in soft laces,
  Like waves in a blossom of foam,
The love-molten lips and fair faces,
  All gone where the pale summers roam:
And the rustling of robes, and wan shimmer
  Of tresses unbound in the sun,
Like memories, fainter and dimmer,
  Remind us the revel is done.

And we envy the doom of the flowers
  That sighed a good-night ere they slept:
Their summer was richer than ours,
  Yet they have not lingered and wept;
They lie among grasses and briars,
  Unheeding the joys that have fled,
And the night winds, responding like friars,
  Chant over the beautiful dead.

Here sadly at evening I ponder
  By the maple that leans o'er the gate,
When the sun rests its shield over yonder
  A-weary of empire and state;

For the maple is solemnly glowing,
A glory of funeral fire,
And the sibylline autumn is throwing
Red stains on the sacred attire.

What troths have been plighted, I wonder,
In the flickering shade of her bower?
What hearts that have wandered asunder
Met here for a passionate hour?
What rosy caresses, what kisses
Of lips that were wreathed with flame
When the stars from their blue wildernesses
Looked down without shadow of blame!

But the birds that once sung as they braided
Soft nests in these tapestried halls
Are gone with the days that have faded
As her coronal withers and falls.
The loves were requited, or broken,
The romance has grown weary and old,
And the falling dead leaf is a token
That life is unlovely and cold.

While the loves of us all are thus falling,
And wild o'er the billowy world,
We listen for fate's muffled calling
And drift with our sails darkly furled;
As we carry our dead as we wander,
And dream of a lovelier shore,
While many the tears that we squander,
Yet know not the loss we deplore.

But the maple has lent us her story;
  Illumined and tinted each page!
And winter may come, chill and hoary,
  And trample her wreath in his rage,
But we, that have read it discreetly,
  Have come to be wise in our grief,
For our tremulous spirits take sweetly
  The lore of the crimsoning leaf.

For the leaves, ere they wither, must nourish
  The buds that shall banner the May,
And the rootlets will strengthen and flourish
  In the generous mould of decay,
And so, with relentless endeavor,
  Yet nearer and nearer the stars,
The soul builds its kingdom forever
  In the dust of its woes and its wars.

OREGON RAIN

It is raining, raining, raining!
  And my spirit darkly rues
All the pleasures that are waning
  In a carnival of blues.
For the constant drone and sputter
Of the shower seems to mutter
  Memories of Noah's cruise!
Surely neither navigation,
Irrigation, or oblation,
Nor the final conflagration
  Such a streaming flood require.

Nor the gentle mitigation
Of the regulation ration
  Of the lurid liquid fire!
Lo, there's something awful in it—
And I'll tell you in a minute
  Of a fancy, damp and dire,
  From some planet's spectral stare—
Down, and down, within the hollow
Womb of seas where bright Apollo
  Never drifts his yellow hair
  O'er the rising blush of morn,—
Nor the moon to any maiden
Pours the silv'ry dream of Aidenn
  From her lily wreathen horn,
  Earth has fallen as of old,
In the dying baron's wassail,
  Fell the wine-flushed cup of gold.
Round about the dripping shrouds
Of the weary dreary clouds
  In the charnel of the deep,
Where the toiling globe of ocean
Swings in dark, mysterious motion
  Round a misty realm of sleep;
And a silence, dim, eternal,
Hushes all the march of time;—
Only ever and forever,
Like the wail of some lone river,
Fraught with sorrow strange, supernal,
Mourn the clouds, in ceaseless rhyme,
  As they ever weep and weep:
Fallen world of wrong and sorrow,

Never hope for brighter morrow—
  Doom has met thee at the tryst!
In the glamour of thy dreaming
Thro' the ivory-gated East;
With the red and purple feast
  Of the roses he has kissed!
For the gold-browed stars have faced them
  Off to other loves and wars,
And the sparkling crest of Venus
That so often flashed between us
  Turns along the trail of Mars.
O, the years shall wane and sicken,
And the turbid clouds shall thicken,
  In the lonely lapse of time,
Till the cavern gloom of sea
Fills, anon, with massy waters,
And Willamette's sons and daughters
  Rise to other lives sublime
In an ocean broad and free!
O the changes, slow, dramatic,
  Of the gloomy world terrene—
Merging still to shapes aquatic
  As the ages shift the scene,
Till the rustling woods that quiver
  Sweet with every sigh and sound,
Never wake again, and never
  Song of bird is heard around;
And the music and the beauty,
Toil and battle, love and duty,
  Of the bright terrestrial space
Shall be hushed and chilled and faded

In the ghostly deeps invaded
  By a cold and silent race;
O thy hamlets of the meadows,
  And thy cities of the plain;—
Have we not their fates and shadows
  In the sunny tropic main?
Coral cities, wall and tower,
Temples, arches, tree and flower,
  Wrought with all the soul of art!
And the fishes, gold and scarlet—
  Silver-mailed, and purple-barred,
Shine, like idle orient people,
  'Mong the columns, flushed and starred;
And a myriad shapes of terror,
Dumb as death and black as error,
  Loiter slow in street and isle
Or in slumber's horrid semblance
  Lure their prey with hellish smile.
Thus forever and forever,
  Till the sad sea songs are sung,
Name or fame of thee shall never
  Live on human lip or tongue;
Set within the dim recesses
Of the ocean's wildernesses
  Shall thy sculptured city shine,
And the gold of mermaid tresses
  Match the emerald of thine!
And I sit and look and listen,
  While the pathos of the rain
And the streaming tears that glisten
  On the misty window pane

Weave a sadness in my fancy
And a horror in my brain!
Ah, believe me, land of apples,
Swarming hives, and matchless grain,
'Tis a fate that with thee grapples
In the sobbing of the rain;
And its ceaseless hum and patter
Is the many million clatter
Of a vast surrounding main,—
Beating, beating, nor retreating
Till its hoof prints weld the change
Of a people—fleeting, fleeting
Into ocean's finny main.

THE KING DISROBED

When the fair harvest's cloth of gold
Was gathered, shining fold on fold,
And borne away, and riding after,
Swart knights of toil made jest and laughter,
High on his ancient granite throne,
Hedged by dim spears, sat Hood alone,
In majesty of mighty mould.

Grand was the largess he bestowed,
Until the garners overflowed,
And August, on his sickle leaning,
Had half forgot Time's restless meaning,
So charmed he was to hear the song
Of peace and plenty swell along
The tawny fields where summer glowed.

Then sweet September burned away,
As wistful as a nuptial day;
Blue was the sky, and blue the river
Where Dian saw her mirrored quiver,
Filled with its silver arrows, float
Beneath the passing pleasure boat;
And smiled again, but could not stay.

All through the first October days
The sunshine swooned in netted haze,
While musky grapes anon were reeling
With the rich nectar they were stealing.
And down among the orchard trees
The ripe fruit dropt with every breeze,
And hushed were all the harvest lays.

Now turn—the mighty chief behold!
Still flames his splendid crown of gold,
But his brown limbs, tho' bare, are telling,
With every rocky muscle swelling,
How grand a king he is, withal,
Though his bright ermine from him fall,
And leave him like a beggar old.

Never more kingly, for he gave
His robe to send the cool life-wave
Down to the parching valleys yonder,
Where maidens, with sweet eyes of wonder,
Look up to see his visage shine,
And richer yet than purple wine,
The sunset light his shoulders lave.

How grandly calm he sits and waits
The opening of the sapphire gates,
When angels from the looms of Aidenn
With woof of pearl and diamond laden
Shall garnish him, to stand, the white
Pure prophet of the winter night,
To talk with stars and tell their fates!

Such are the kings of men, the strong
Who triumph over chance and wrong
And in adversity's December,
When friendship smoulders in the ember,
Still wear true manhood's fadeless crown,
And wait till God sends shining down
The recompense deferred so long!

THE MYSTIC RIVER

To Blanche

A happy maiden, pure and fair,
With fresh wild flowers in thy hair,
Thou standest, wistful, dreaming;
For lo, the river thou hast sought
In rambles sweet with budding thought,
Before thee now is gleaming!

Its rhythmic waves upon the beach
In low, melodious silv'ry speech
Repeat their mystic greeting;

With mellow murmurs, o'er and o'er,
They chant of glad days gone before
And visions, fair and fleeting.

This is the river of the years,
Dimpled with joys and dimmed with tears,
To which thy youth was speeding,
Whose far-off music thou hast heard
When sunset's last, low-nestling bird,
Has hushed his tender pleading.

Here waits thee, Blanche, a slender sloop
Where rare gold-dusted lilies droop
And gleaming reeds are sighing;
Its snowy sail will soon be spread
Above thee, joyous, garlanded,
And with the winds be flying.

But ere thy trembling bark takes flight,
Pluck from the reeds a lotus white
Thy young days to remember;—
A chaliced vow, a fragrant pray'r
To comfort thee when life's despair
Is bleaker than December.

The blue waves flash with morning beams
And, far and faint, rose-tinted dreams
O'er isles of magic hover;
And somewhere, by his castle gate,
Like thee, a questioner of fate,
Delays thy restless lover.

Adieu! adieu! A last good-by,
The myrtle groves of girlhood sigh
From shores adream with beauty;
Sprent with the beams of grace divine
The crown of womanhood is thine,
And every pledge of duty.

The rose-bud in its calyx green,
Its folded loveliness unseen,
The summer fairies cherish;
But danger haunts the full-blown rose,
With ev'ry wooing wind that blows
Its perfumes waste and perish.

Sail forth, sail out, sail proudly on
By cliffs of twilight, capes of dawn,
Still to the true course cleaving—
Shadow and sunlight on thy sail
As shifting fortunes flush and fail,
Thy own life-myst'ry weaving.

Thy world is now all light and love,
Blue waves beneath, blue skies above,
But waves and skies may darken;
O'er faithless isles of song and bloom
Bright shapes will beckon thee to doom,
If once thou pause and hearken.

Christmas Chimes

THE EVE OF CHRIST

Again do the sunset shadows weave
The tapestries of a hallowed eve,
And to all the myriad tribes of men
Is the Syrian legend told again.

Listen, O children! you can hear,
This night of all nights of the year,
The sea forgetting life's woe and wrong
And singing a mystic cradle song.

Look aloft! And on night's temple scrolled
You may read the lyric, in astral gold,
The stars once sang when shepherds pale
Beheld the wonder in Jordan's vale.

To-night, of all nights of the year,
Should parental love be warm and near,
And to-night should little children know
How childhood was honored long ago.

For we who, with worn, way-weary feet,
Have journeyed the morning star to greet,
Have learned full many a care to leave
Hard by the gates of Christmas Eve.

Like the Magi, over the desert space
We are seeking the chosen altar place,
Blest in our pilgrim robes to stand
Under the star—in Holy Land!

Giver of all things, grant that we,
Who can bring no gifts to hearth or tree,
May give to the world good will at least,
And in spirit share our brother's feast.

May we with all patience work and wait,
Though our guerdons seem to linger late,
And then, at the last, not wholly fall
Should they ne'er come to us at all.

Yet this is no time for sombre thought,
Rememb'ring the grace to sorrow brought,
But of ringing laughter, rosy glee,
The nuptials of time and eternity.

Howe'er they change our land and laws,
Oh still let us greet gray Santa Claus,
Glad patron saint of our girls and boys
And a world of mingling merry noise!

May even the humblest cottage roofs
Be struck to-night by his reindeer's hoofs,
And the cheery driver find his own
By the way the chimney smoke has flown.

Should the children wake and hear the sea,
So close to our homes that happy be,
They will know that all the blest night long
It is singing a mystic cradle song.

THE CHRIST STAR

The night is near, and the twilight falls
In bannered gloom from the sapphire walls;
A crape of shadow is looped and hung
From star to star, and the moon is swung,
A funeral lamp, from east to west,
To hallow the earth's hibernal rest.
The gates that ushered the dappled hours
Of song and sheen, and a thousand flowers,
Are closed and crossed by the bars of cloud
That Winter shapes on his anvil loud;
And lo! with spears in the battle-smoke
Tossed wild, and arms that the storm invoke,
The bare trees stand in the trailing mists,
Like plumeless knights in the tourney lists.
The fields that rolled in a surf of gold
Are bleak and drear as the churchyard mould;
The peaks that glistened, the hills that swept
In waves of blossom, and brightly crept
Away and down to the vales of green
That slept in beautiful peace between,
Are as sere and dark as the faded page
Of some sweet tale of the golden age.
With waves that toss like a dreamer's arms,

A river, dark with its cloud of storms,
Flows here, and chants in an undertone
Of life all weary, and wild and lone!
A pale leaf stirs, with a rustling sigh,
"I tarry late, but my rest is nigh!"
And, still and gray, like a living sign
Of hopelessness, on yon blasted pine
A lonely eagle looks forth and far
On waste and woe, and blight and scar.
Yet Earth will rise, and her wintry face,
So swept by storms and the spoiler's trace,
Will blush and beam with a joy like wine
At Spring's return, and the seas will shine
Beneath the sky, in the glowing calms,
And kiss the sun from their silver palms!
And Day will come, in his crown of gold,
With rosy dawn on his banner's fold;
While mystic Night will be sailing soon
In sweet pursuit, with his crescent moon
Bent like a glimmering sheet of light,
Through star-set seas that are blossom bright;
The sheeted hills will awake again;
The brook will laugh as it leaves the glen
To chase the birds, and to pray and plead
For a lily's kiss in the clover mead;
The dimpling river will loiter long
By banks of roses and groves of song,
And in and out, with her crystal feet
Agleam in many a green retreat,
Will taunt old ocean, and sing and say,
"I come, I come;" and yet still delay.

But what of us, and the loved of ours—
The hopes that fell with the leaves and flowers?
O History, is thy tongue but dust—
Thy tomes but graves, and thy pen but rust?
In all the heaps of the ashen past,
Is there no jewel of hope at last?
On graven column and pictured tomb,
Is there no sign that will light the gloom?
O Science! Thou that has borne the torch
From world to world, and within the porch
Of God's arcana, 'tis surely thine
To teach of heaven and grace divine—
In all thy flowery walks above,
Hast thou not gathered one spray of love—
The angel face of one immortelle
That says, "Toil on, for the rest is well"?
O, stony lips of our mother earth,
All sealed with pain since the years had birth,
Have ye no story but that sad page
Of death and terror from age to age?
Shall years renew, and the seasons chase
In cloud and sunshine o'er Nature's face,
Yet only we, with a world at stake,
Lie down, and slumber, and never wake?

A silence falls, for the echoing wail
Of hearts despairing begins to fail;
When lo! a rift in the clouds is made,
And white, like a warning finger laid
Across the murmurous lips of Night,
Shines down a glimmering track of light!

The mists are parted, and hark! behold,
A star leans out with a brow of gold!
While bright and fair as a falling beam,
And sweet as an angel's earthward dream,
The voice that fell upon Galilee,
Sounds yet again over land and sea,
"The Saviour liveth; come, follow me!"
And thus renewing our souls' reprieve
From Christ, the Star of our Christmas eve,
We kiss the ray, as they kissed the hem
Of his white mantle in Bethlehem,
And live again, and will doubt no more,
Though life grow dark and its burdens sore.

TO-NIGHT

Dec. 24, 1877

When the stars gather in beauty, to-night,
Glorious, love-litten—a heaven in bloom—
Somewhere, astray, in a sorrowful plight,
Earth will be dreamily toiling towards doom;
And the myriads at rest
On her storm-stricken breast,
Rocked into dreams, will be never afraid
Tho' stars marching over and stars streaming under,
Filling the deep with a pageant of wonder,
Guard and attend her with godlike parade.

When the stars gather in splendor to-night,
Darkness, O Planet, will cover thy face—

Death-ridden darkness, in shapes that affright,
Black with the curses that blacken our race!
And the mist, like the ghost
Of a hope that is lost,
Strangely will hover o'er fields that are bare;
And the seas, at whose heart the old sorrow is throbbing
Restless and hopeless, eternally sobbing—
Madly will kneel in a tempest of prayer.

When the stars gather in armor, to-night,
Planet of wailing, thy fate shall be read!
Steal like a nun under scourge from their sight,
Gather thy sorrows, like robes, to thy head!
For the vestal white rose
Of the crystalline snows
Coldly has sealed thee to silence unblessed;
And the red rose is dead in thy gardens of pleasure—
Forests, like princes bereft of all treasure,
Rise and upbraid thee, a skeleton jest!

When the stars gather in vengeance, to-night,
Gibbering history, too, will arise,
Rustling her garments of mildew and blight,
Only to curse thee, O mother of lies!
With thy goblet all drained,
And thy wanton lip stained—
Singing wild songs where all ruin appears—
What shalt thou say of this dust that was glory,
Dust that beseeches thee still with a story,
Deep in whose silence are rivers of tears?

When the stars gather in triumph, to-night,
Raining their joy thro' the chill and the gloom,
Only one jewel, an emblem of light,
Marvelous planet, thy crest shall illume!
It was Calvary's first,
And its white lustre burst
Wide and resplendent, a dawn and a day!
Clasp it and keep it, O princeland of Heaven,
The deep-bosomed worlds for that signal have striven—
Æons of wrong shall not wrest it away!

When the stars gather in chorus, to-night,
Singing the lullaby song of our Lord,
Childhood shall come to us, dimpled and bright,
Kissed by His promise, and fed by His word;
And our fears shall depart,
And our anguish of heart,
Rending us darkly the lengthy years through!
And the dust of the perished shall blossom, and beauty
Garland the lowliest pathway of duty,
Rich with the hopes that our spirits renew.

THE MATCHLESS STORY

The tender and olden dream of Eve
Descends on the Orient world,
And the purple shadows the angels weave
In Hinnom are softly furled;

The day, in his kingliest diadem,
  Kneels low at the Hebron gate—
Good-night! O widowed Jerusalem,
  Thou wasted, desolate!

Good-night! But a crown of sunset bloom
  Is wreathed upon Olivet,
And trailing lances of flame illume
  Dear Zion with splendor yet.
How linger the steps of parting day!
  Is Ajalon crimson still,
And Joshua's sword like a beam astray,
  Performing Jehovah's will?

Ah, no! As a groom, all loth to part
  From his loved on the bridal eve,
Will fold her again to his captive heart,
  A joy he can scarce believe;
The golden trance of the lingering ray
  (O calmly it fell of yore!)
Caresses the earth in fond delay
  Of the rapture that lies before.

The pageant has passed—a sombre shade
  Is wrought in the woof of air;
The arisen stars aside have laid
  Their mantles of sable rare;
And silence, and wonder, and beauty hold
  The land with a solemn spell,
Which, wearing the curse the prophets told,
  Waits promised joys as well.

While Dian, in Attic beauty sweet,
Now chastely pursues her way,
Ah, little she dreams her silvery feet
Are nearing a swift dismay;
For, ever, on this memorial night
The Athenian gods are slain,
And Pallas, with helm and ægis dight,
Is struck from her ancient reign.

"To-morrow! to-morrow!" Jordan sings
All down the historic vale,
And back from the empty tombs of kings
Is echoed the mystic wail.
All shorn of the palm and olive—how,
Judea, thy hope has fled!—
To-morrow? And then—to lie as now,
A dead land clasping the dead!

But ere the morrow dawned in woe
The night of all joy befell,
And palms clustered green, and Kedron's flow,
Was bright in its rocky dell;
The shepherds that watched their flocks by night—
In truth, they were simple folk—
Were lounging at ease in the soft moonlight
When the voice out of heaven spoke.

Perhaps they were saying idle things,
Or chattering, as rustics will,
Of their daily life—the toil that brings
The needful food young mouths to fill;

Perhaps, in a dreamy, broken way,
They spoke of their heart's desire,
And gazed o'er the moonlit hills away,
And wished that their lots were higher.

Perhaps—but the sudden voice has hushed
The murmur of ev'ry tongue;
And some may have seen a wing that rushed,
While one to his feet has sprung—
Coarse-clad in the garb of his simple life,
O wisest of all was he—
And stayed not for words of doubt or strife,
But said: "Let us go and see."

They went, and the meek-eyed mother found,
Still nursing the new-born child;
And there, with the homely kine around,
The Saviour upon them smiled!
For thus, to the palace, hut, or stall,
And down to the humblest kind,
'Twas said that Messiah came to all—
That they who will shall find.

Now, well may the choral stars that kept
Their watch o'er the shepherd's fold,
Low lulling the whispered joy that swept
The chords of their harps of gold,
Break forth with the matchless song that rang
Adown through the crystal spheres,
When the morning stars together sang
At the birth of sunlit years!

A diviner light than ever wove
  Its scarf in the summer rain
Is come, on the healing wings of love,
  To banish a night of pain;
The cruel edge of the broken law
  Has drunk other blood than ours,
And peace and forgiveness softly draw
  Around it celestial flowers.

And oh, it is not, sad Palestine,
  For scenes of thy tragic days,
The pomp of kings, and the battle sheen,
  We cherish thy mournful ways;
'Tis not for the footprints, dim and grand,
  Of Israel's scattered race,
We toil o'er the seas awhile to stand
  And weep in thy sacred place.

Not Acre and, oh, not Ascalon
  Do beckon our steps apart;
Nor name that romance lies bright upon,
  Lorraine or the Lion-Heart;—
But we follow our Lord to Galilee,
  Bethesda and still Siloam—
O'er the foot-worn path to Bethany
  To Mary's and Martha's home!

CHRISTMAS EVE

The night, in a wreath and scarf of stars,
Bends fair, on this Christmas eve,
O'er a world grown old in loves and wars
Where the fates our fortunes weave;
And our joys and woes, as we vigil keep
On the templed shore and misted deep,
Are wrought in the finished web we leave.

The earth is as sad and sweet as then
When the shepherds watched by night,
And over the Orient vale and glen
Was sprinkled the chaliced light
Of the stars, like lotus flowers abloom
On the Syrian sky's empurpled gloom,
As the waters rippled soft delight.

In tones subdued the tale went round,
Maybe of their loves and dreams,
As we to-night, in thought profound,
Are binding the scattered gleams
Of past and present in golden sheaves—
The gleanings of many Christmas eves,
In the paths that led by happy streams.

Again is the sacred story told
Of the wonder that befell,
Which the world, though sadly wan and old,
In its heart has cherished well;

While the night is the night of nights for youth,
Aglow in its beauty, love and truth,
  Since the Virgin-born came with men to dwell.

We have fought and conquered and knowledge
    gained
  In myriad mazy ways,
But the light the stars of Syria rained
  On the shepherds round us plays;
And when, with the new creeds bowed, we grope
And lift our brows for a gleam of hope,
  We are crowned again with its ling'ring rays.

The rosy and tender, smiling Child
  Was the bloom of a warmer faith
Than any that e'er our dreams beguiled
  With a dim and fleeting wraith;
While we still return to the footworn way,
And the strangest night and dearest day
  Between life's mystical dawn and death.

What myst'ry, then, that on Christmas eve
  The kingdom of childhood blooms,
And the weary heart forgets to grieve
  Or linger at phantom tombs;
For the sable wings of fear are furled,
And love and laughter over the world
  Are lightly chasing its chills and glooms.

And so, brow-swept by tress and curl,
  Be the dreaming children blest,

While the earth with diamond floss and pearl
Is in bridal splendor dressed—
For to them and us will come the morn
When the olden hope, in faith reborn,
Is by the smile of the Christ caressed.

THE DEATHLESS LEGEND

The feet that the sweet-browed Mary laved
And, bending so meekly low,
With her cool, dark tresses, softly waved,
Caressed in the long ago,
Again make beautiful the world
With the radiant tread of love;
And over banners, tossed and curled,
There broodeth the mystic dove.

Though the storm of strife roll loud and high,
And Woe be our lingering guest,
While the winds the tremulous story sigh,
Our lives are not all unblest;
Let us still believe the magic tale
The wondering shepherds told,
And we'll smile serene at War's stern mail,
And sepulchres lone and cold.

As the tired child, sleeping, clasps its toy,
Close, close to its pulsing breast,
We, too, aweary of pain and joy,
With our legend fain would rest;

For what are we, on this bridge of life,
  Aquiver o'er dark, strange seas,
But the children of mystery, born to strife,
  With Death in our red wine's lees!

So tell us the story that erst was told
  Under shimmering Syrian stars;
Tell it ere science, bleak and bold,
  Its elysian promise mars;
For lo, we are waiting and Christ awakes
  In the manger of Galilee,
And a glory brighter than morning breaks
  Over wastes of shore and sea!

NEW YEAR'S EVE

Crowned with December's wreath of cloud,
  The last wave of the weary year
Breaks where the sea-crags, sable-browed,
  Gazing on Time's waste waters drear
With sphinx-like sadness, catch the moan
Of life's remorseless undertone,
  And watch and wait, serene, austere.

For these are misted crags that keep
  The gateway to that other sea,
Whither the years in long waves sweep
  To shoreless, gray Eternity;
And still, with runic script and scar,
And warders of the moaning bar,
  In whose white strife the bond wax free.

And now that bursting wave has flung
  The mimic of its dying wail—
Sweeter than anthem ever sung
  When heads were bowed and lips were pale—
Backward across the hearts that weave,
With song and prayer, this New Year's Eve,
  The memories of life's green vale.

Touched by the memory of years,
  And swept by wreathing clouds of spray,
How beautiful the past appears,
  How gently curves the mountain way
We thought so rough when tempests beat
And trumpet never called retreat
  Or changed the battle's dark array!

There lies the desert, desert still,
  But, green by every track we made
At Duty's stern command and will,
  A laurel springs with fragrant shade,
And on the place of Faith's dark scenes
A red rose on a lily leans,
  And flow'rets mingle braid and braid.

There gleams the spring we did not see,
  A golden cup beside it hung,
Fair type of the good gifts and free
  We often blindly strayed among;
And where we sowed and never reaped
The tasselled, yellow sheaves are heaped
  And "Harvest Home" is blithely sung.

The forms and faces we recall
  Are lit by some supernal gleam,
For angels stand behind them all,
  Their better natures still supreme—
And out of hyacinthian eyes
Mildly repose our dull surprise
  That things may not be what they seem.

MILLIARIUM AUREUM

A Poem of the Parting Year

The crystalled petals of roseal hours
  The remembered earth relume,
While the world is white with angel flowers
  And garlands of bridal bloom;
For the year is mouldering in ash and ember,
And the wild, wan face of the drear December
  Is white with a sombre doom.

As sunset and dawn, twin chaplets, meetly
  Garnish the golden day,
And the brow of age is clustered sweetly
  With the blossom of long-lost May—
The stars still shake from their curling tresses
The floral snow that divinely dresses
  The Kingdoms that pass away.

The grand old monarchs in cloister quiet
  Forsook the realms they won;

Thus, too, the year, at the welcome fiat,
Goes forth discrowned and lone
In the solemn night, as so hereafter
The years will follow, with moan or laughter,
Till all is over and done.

Again, it may be no more forever,—
Let us crown the parting year,
And wait and watch, the stroke dissever
The guest that must leave us here.
We too may part in the glad time coming
When the roses bloom and the bees are humming,
Or the grapes are flushed with cheer.

Slowly around the mystic dial
Are swept the silver spears,—
Slowly and sure, with God's espial,
Each fateful crisis nears;
And the pendulum, serene and subtle,
Is weaving fate with its rhythmic shuttle
In a woof of hopes and fears.

But the web of life is warm and glowing,
A regal cloth of gold,
With a living lustre, full and flowing
In many a starry fold,
That will burn away the stain of sorrow,
As the cloudy day by the cheery morrow
In sapphire bloom unrolled.

When the leaves of time are dim and yellow
We prize their fading lore,
While the fruits of love are golden mellow,
That shine on the backward shore;
But the world is rich, and the Lord is gracious,
And the castled realms are bright and spacious
That lift and spread before.

There is no dead past—its dead are risen;
We guard their empty urns,
But the winged spark has left its prison,
And soars and sings and burns;
E'en the mould of death but awhile reposes
To burst in a song of bridal roses
As the regnant flame returns.

Of threaded pearls the past is woven—
The central orb's attire—
And its misty deeds and dreams are cloven
To kiss in crimson fire;
O'er buds that bourgeon and seas that quiver,
The refrain of love delays forever
As the flowing moons expire.

The Hellenic march has never ended;—
Upon the Attic plain
The violet's crown that time has rended
Garlands each classic fane;
And the god-like art of its glowing marbles
Is a light that shines and a song that warbles,
On every land and main.

Again and again the curtain rises,
And music wings the hour,
As the old, old story, in sweet disguises,
Is wrought with subtle power—
Till joy and sorrow, in life's long mazes,
Are wed again, and their lifted faces
Blossom in seraph flower.

In the closing scene the plot unravels,
And the lovers, hand in hand,
And the friend and the foe, and the fool that cavils,
Before the footlights stand;
And we know, at last, how truth dissembles,
But is ever the silver thread that trembles,
At the touch of a magic wand.

And the old year thus, in his dust and ashes,
Is kingly and potent still,—
His approval shines, and his menace flashes
From many a templed hill.
If it be with tears that are bitter, real,
We must cleanse the brow of his pure ideal
And keep his worship still.

Adieu! For the banded stars are singing
A coronation hymn,
While the pearly rose of dawn is springing
Eastward, and night is dim;
The gates are open, O pilgrim brother!
And the year is thine,—perhaps no other
Thy cherished hopes shall brim.

Take down the wreaths that idly wither
In Time's imperial hall,
For the jewelled court is swarming hither
While life is all in all;
Put on thy robes, and tread the measure,
And the angels of all past hopes and pleasure
Attend thy needful call.

Historical & Narrative Poems

THE CAMPFIRES OF THE PIONEERS

Vincere est vivere!

Striking at ease his epic lyre,
The laurelled Mantuan has sung
Beleaguered Troy's illustrious pyre—
The daring sail Æneas flung
To wayward gales, the voyage long
That tracked the silver waves of song
Until the worn and weary oar
Has kissed the far Lavinian shore;
The Argo's classic pennon streams
Along a fairer sea of dreams,
The Mayflower now has furled her wings,
And restfully at anchor swings—
Columbia chants to columned seas
The triumph of the Genoese—
And yet, stout hearts, no fitting meed
Of panegyric crowns your deed,
From which a stately empire springs.
The minions of a perfumed age
Already crowd upon the stage,—
The massive manhood of the past
In many a graceful mould is cast;
And yet with calm and kindly eyes
You view the feast for others spread,

And hail the blue benignant skies
Resigned and grandly comforted.
It was for this you broke the way
Before the sunset gates of Day—
For this, with God-like faith endued,
You scaled the mystic crags of Fate,
And with resounding labors hewed
The Doric pillars of the state.

There is no task for you to do—
Your tents are furled, the bugle blown—
But yet another day, and you
Will live in clustered fame alone.
The fir will chant a song of rue,
The pine will drop a wreath, maybe,
And o'er the dim Cascades the stars
Will nightly roll their gleaming cars
You followed well from sea to sea.
Before your scarred battalions wheel
Into the mystic realm of shade,
And on your grizzled brows the seal
Of mystery is softly laid,
Once more around your old campfires,
That smoulder like fulfilled desires,
Rehearse the story of your toil—
Set forth the hero crowned with spoil—
The glimmer of triumphant steel,
Beneath the garland and the braid.

O further than the legions bore
The eagles of imperial Rome,

Three thousand miles, a weary march,
You followed Hesper's golden torch,
Until it stooped on this green shore
And lit the rosy fires of home.
The sad and solemn morn you turned
And quenched the sacred flames that burned
On hearths endeared for years and years;
It seemed your very souls grew dark
With those sweet fires, the latest spark
Was drowned in bitter, bitter tears.
A softer, sweeter sunlight wrapt
The forms of all familiar things,
And as each chord of feeling snapped
Another angel furled its wings:
The lights and shadows in the lane,
The oak beside the foot-worn stile,
Whose wheeling shade a weary while
Had told the hours of joy and pain—
The vine that clambered o'er the door
And many a purple cluster bore—
The vestal flowers of household love—
The sloping roof that wore the stain
Of summer sun and winter rain,
And smoky chimney tops above—
The beauty of the orchard trees,
Bedecked with blossoms, glad with bees—
The brook that all the livelong day
Had many things to sing and say—
All these upon your vision dwell
And weave the sorrow of farewell.

And now the last good-bye is said—
Good-bye! the living and the dead
In those sad words together speak,
And all the chosen ways are bleak!

Forward! The cracking lashes send
A thrill of action down the train,
Their brawny necks the oxen bend
With creaking yoke and clanking chain;
The horsemen gallop down the line,
And swerve around the lowing kine
That straggle loosely on the plain,
And lift glad hands to babes that laugh,
And dash the buttercups like chaff.
Hurrah! the skies are jewel blue;
In softest green and braided gold
The robes of April are unrolled,
And hopes are high and hearts are true!
Hurrah! Hurrah! The bold, the free!
The sudden sweep of ecstasy
That lifts the soul on wings of fire
When fears consume and doubts expire
And life in one swift torrent speeds
To the great tide of stirring deeds.

And now the sun is dropping down,
The lights and shadows, red and brown,
Are weaving sunset's purple spell:
The teams are freed, the fires are made,
Like scarlet night-flow'rs in the shade,
And pleasant groups before, between,

Are thronging in the fitful sheen—
The day is done and all is well.

So pass the days, so fall the nights,
A banquet of renewed delights—
The old horizons lift and pass
In magic changes like a dream,
And in heaven's azure glass
To-morrow's jasper arches gleam
With many a vale and mountain mass
And many a singing, shining stream.
The past is dead and daisied now—
Its shadow fades from heart and brow—
The air is incense, and the breeze
Is sweet with siren melodies,
And all the castled hills before
In blooming vistas sweep and soar.
Like silver lace the clouds are strewn
Along the distant, dreamy zone;
It is a happy, happy time
As wayward as a poet's rhyme,
And ever as the sun goes down
The West is shut with rosy bars,
When Night puts on her ebon crown
And lights the watch fires of the stars.

. . . . . .

A hundred nights, a hundred days;
Nor folded cloud nor silken haze
Mellow the sun's midsummer blaze.
Along the brown and barren plain
In silence drags the wasted train;

The dust starts up beneath your tread,
Like angry ashes of the dead,
To blind you with a choking cloud
And wrap you in a yellow shroud.
There are no birds to sing your joy,
You have no joy for birds to sing,—
A hundred fangs your hearts destroy—
A thousand troubles fret and sting.
The desert mocks you all the while
With that dry shimmer of a smile
That dazzles on a bleaching skull;—
The bloom is withered on your cheek,
You slowly move and lowly speak,
And every eye is dim and dull.
Alas, it is a lonesome land
Of bitter sage and barren sand,
Under a bitter, barren sky
That never heard the robin sing,
Nor kissed the lark's exultant wing,
Nor breathed the rose's fragrant sigh!
A weary land—alas! alas!
The shadows of the vultures pass—
A spectral sign across your path;
The gaunt, gray wolf, with head askance,
Throws back at you a scowling glance
Of cringing hate and coward wrath,
And like a wraith accursed and banned
Fades out before your lifted hand.
A dim, sad land, forgot, forsworn,
By all bright life that may not mourn,
And crazed with glistening ghost of seas

In broideries of flowers and trees,
And rivers, blue and cool, that seem
To ripple as in fevered dream
Only to taunt the thirst and fly
From withered lip and lurid eye.
A hundred days, a hundred nights,—
The goal is further than before,
And all the changing shades and lights
Are wrought in Fancy's woof no more.
The sun is weary overhead,
And pallid deserts round you spread
A sorrowful eternity;
And if some grizzly mountains here
Confront your march with forms of fear,
You turn aside and pass them by.
And all are over-worn—the flesh
Is now a frayed and faded mesh
That will not mask the inward flame;
There is no longer any care
To round the speech, or speak men fair,
Or any gentle sense of shame;
The hearts of all are sifted through—
The grain drops through the windy husks,
And false lights flickering round the true
Are quenched at last in dews and dusks.
And some are silent, some are loud,
And rage like beasts among the crowd,—
And some are mild, and some are sharp
In word and deed, and snarl and carp,
And fret the camp with petty broils;
While some of temper sweet and bland

Do seem to bear a magic wand
That wins the secret of their toils—
Rare souls that waste like sandal-wood
In many a fragrant deed and mood;
And some invoke the wrath of God,
Or feign to kiss the scourging rod,—
And some, maybe with better prayers,
Stand up in all their griefs and cares
And clench their teeth, and do and die,
Without a whine, a curse or cry.
And so the dust and grit and stain
Of travel wears into the grain,
And so the hearts and souls of men
Were darkly tried and tested then,
So that in happy after years,
When rainbows gild remembered tears,
Should any friend enquire of you
If such or such an one you knew—
I hear the answer, terse and grim,
"Ah, yes, I crossed the plains with him!"

And lo! a moaning phantom stands
To greet you in the lonely lands,
Among all lesser shadows dight,
With spoils of death; his meagre hands
Salute you as you pass, and claim
The sacrifice that feeds his flame:
The march has broken into flight,
And wreck and ruins strew the road
The flaming phantom has bestowed;
The ox lies gasping in his yoke,

Beside the wagon that he drew,—
Where the forsaken campfires smoke
To hopeless skies of tawny blue;
And here are straight, still mounds that mark
The flight of life's delusive spark—
The sombre points of pause that lie
So thick in human destiny.
And O, so dark on this bleak page
Of drifting sand and dreary sage!
The sultry levels of the day
The night with weird enchantment fills,
And frowning forests stretch away
Along the slopes of shadow hills;
And in the solemn stillness breaks
The wild wolf-music of the plain,
As if a deeper sorrow wakes
The dreary dead in that refrain
That swells and gathers like a wail
Of woe from Pluto's ebon pale,
And sinks in pulseless calm again.

A change at last! An opal mist
Along the faint horizon's rim
Is banked against the amethyst
Of summer's sky,—so far, so dim,
You shade your eyes and gaze and gaze
Until there wavers into sight
A swinging, swaying strand of white,
And then the sapphire walls and towers
That break the light in quivering showers
And float and fade in diamond haze—

It is the mountains! Grand and calm
As God upon his awful throne,
They build you strength and breathe you balm,
For all their templed might of stone
Is one eternal sculptured psalm!
And now your western course is led
Where grassy pampas spread and spread,
The pastures of the buffalo;
And like the sudden lash of foam
When tropic tempests smite the sea,
And masts are stripped to ward the blow,
A ragged whirl of dust descried
Upon the prairie's sloping side
Portends a storm as swift and free,—
And lo, the herds, they come! they come!
A sweeping thundercloud of life
Loud as Niagara, and grand
As they who rode with plume and brand
On Waterloo's red slope of strife;
Wild as the rush of tidal waves
That roar among their crags and caves,
The trampling bison hurl along,
A black and bounding, fiery mass
That withers, as with flame, the grass—
O! terrible—ten thousand strong!
Meanwhile the dusty teams are stopped,
The wagon tongues are deftly propped,
And drivers by their oxen stand
And soothe them with soft speech and hand,
But, yet, with horn tossed free, and eyes
Ablaze with purple depths of ire,

A thousand servile years expire
And flashes of old nature rise,
As if a sudden spirit woke
That would not brook the chain and yoke,—
And then, the stormy pageant passed,
They bow their calloused necks at last,
And with a heavy stride and slow
The dream of liberty forego.
Alas! it is a land of shades
And mystic visions, swift alarms;
The fretted spirit flames and fades
With changing calls to prayers or arms.

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The day is dying, and the sun
Hangs like a jewel rich with fire
In the deep West of your desire.
And o'er the wide plateau is rolled
A surge of crinkled sunset gold,
Bordered with shadows gray and dun,—
A horseman, with loose waving hair,
Black as the blackness of despair,
Wheels into sight and gives you heed,
And on his haunches reins his steed,
All quivering like a river reed,
And sits him like a statue there,
Transfigured in the sunset sea—
A bronze, bare sphinx of mystery!
A moment thus, in wonder lost,
His eagle plumes all backward tossed,
Then wheels again, as swift as wind,

The wild hair floating free behind,
And sunset's crinkled surges pour
Along an empty waste once more.
But you, since that fantastic shade
Across your desert path has played,
Distrust the very ground you tread,
And shiver with a nameless dread
Till stars drop crimson and the sky
Is wan with heartless treachery.

. . . . . .

For many days a form of white
Has flashed and faded in your sight
In fleeting glimpses as of wings;
Our God's bright palm in beckonings.
It is a secret nursed of each—
You dare not give the thought in speech,
So weirdly solemn is the sign,
As if upon the western stairs
The angel of a thousand prayers
Were come with sacred bread and wine.
Again the still, enchanted hour
Of sunset burns in crimson flower,
And purple-hearted shadows sleep
Like clustered pansies, warm and deep.
Eastward of wreathen crag and wall
The trail that wound and wound all day
In many a dark and devious way
At last with one swift curve ascends
A rolling plain, that breaks and bends
Westward, till rosy curtains fall

O'er mountains massed and magical.
Resplendent as a pearly tent,
Upon the fir-fringed battlement,
Serene in sunset gold and rose,
A pyramid of splendor glows,
So vast and calm and bright, your dream
Is dust and ashes in its gleam.
A maiden speaks—"He led us far—
It is the golden western star!"
And then a youth—"Our goal is won,—
'Tis the pavilion of the sun!"
A gray sage then, in undertone,
"It must be Hood, so grand and lone—
The shining citadel and throne
Of Terminus, that Roman god,
Who marked the line the legions trod,
And set the limits of the world,
Where Cæsar's battle flags were furled!
O, for the dark-eyed prophetess
Who sang in Sinai's wilderness
The gilded chariots' overthrow,
To lead for us the cymballed song
To Him, the Merciful, the Strong,
Who dashed the brimming cup of woe
And was our cloud and flame so long!"
Forward! The crested mountains kneel
To patient toils of fire and steel—
A way is hewn, and you emerge
Upon the Cascades' frozen verge,
And far beneath you and away
To ocean's shining fringe of foam

And summer veil of floating spray,
Behold the land of your emprise,
Serene as tender twilight skies
When day is swooning into gloam!
It is the morning twilight now
That wraps the valley's misted brow;
The bourgeoning of blooming dawn—
The reveille of Oregon!
How brightly on your vision first
The pictured vales and woodlands burst,—
The lakelets set like twinkling gems
Along the prairie's pleated hems,—
The silver brooks and rippled sweeps
Of loit'ring rivers here and there,
And many a waterfall that leaps
In rainbow garlands through the air,—
The skirted maples and the groves
Of oak, the mild home-spirit loves,—
Enamelled plains and crenelled hills
And tangled skeins of brooks and rills,
Imperial forest of the fir,
All redolent of musk and myrrh,
That fling and furl their banners old,
And still their gloomy secret hold
As Time his cloudy censer fills.

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Where the foothills are wooing the meadow
In the dimples that dally and pass,
And the oak swings an indolent shadow
On the daisies that dial the grass,—

In the crescents of rivers, in hollows
Red-lipped in the strawberry time,
And the slope where the forest path follows
A brooklet's melodious rhyme,—
On the sun-rippled knolls and the prairies,
Beloved of the wandering kine,
In the skirts of the woodlands that fairies
Embroider with rose and with vine,
There are tents, and the smoke that is curling
Above in the beautiful dome
Like a guardian spirit is furling
Soft wings o'er the temple of home.

And the axe of the woodman is ringing
All day in sylvestrian halls,
Where the chipmunk is playfully springing
And the bluejay discordantly calls;
As the red chips are fitfully flying
On the asters that sprinkle the moss;
Where the beauty of summer is dying,
And the sun lances glimmer across;
There's a bird that is spectrally knocking
On a pine that is withered and bare,
For the fir-top is trembling and rocking
In the blue of the clear upper air;—
There's a crackling of fibre, the crashing
Of a century crushed at a blow,
While the fir trees are wringing and lashing
Their hands in a frenzy of woe.

A pheasant whirs up from the thicket
In the hush that comes after the fall,

When the squirrel retires to his wicket,
And the blue-bird renounces his call,
And the panther is crouched by the boulder
In the gloom of the canyon anear,
As the brown bear looks over his shoulder,
And the buck blows a signal of fear;
But there's never a pause in your duty,
For the echoing axe is not still
As you waste the green temples of beauty
For the puncheons and rafter and sill
That are wrought in the cabin so lowly
That the trees may clasp hands overhead,
But the heart calls it home, and the holy
Love-light on its hearthstone is shed.

It is staunch and rough-hewn, and the ceiling
Of the fragrant red cedar is made,
With an edging of silver revealing
A picture of sunlight and shade.
And the Word has its place, not a trifle,
Obscured in a pageant of books;
And above the broad mantle your rifle
Is hung on accessible hooks.
O, the freshness of Hope and of Fancy
That illumine the home and the heart
With the grace of a bright necromancy
That excels the adorning of art!
And you rise and look forth, and the glory
Of Hood is before you again,
And the sun weaves a gold-threaded story
In the purple of mountain and glen.

Stand up, and look out of the mansion
That adorns the old scene of the past,
On the fruitage of hope—the expansion
Of the future your vigils forecast!
While the shadows of Hood have been wheeling
Away from the face of the sun,
What a glamour of change has been stealing
O'er the fields that you painfully won!
Like the castles that fade at cock-crowing
The enchantments arise and advance
Where the cities of commerce are glowing
Like pearls in the braid of Romance;
For a state, in her shimmering armor,
Like Pallas Athena has come,
And her ægis is fringed with the warmer
Refulgence that circles our home.

As for you, you are gray, and the thunder
Of the battle has smitten each brow
Where the freshness of youth was turned under
By Time's immemorial plow;
But the pictures of Memory linger
Like the shadows that turn to the east,
And will point with a tremulous finger
To the things that have perished and ceased;
For the trail and the foot-log have vanished,
The canoe is a song and a tale,
And the flickering church-spire has banished
The uncanny redman from the vale;
The cayuse is no longer in fashion,
He is gone—with a flutter of heels,

And the old wars are dead, and their passion
In the crystal of culture congeals;
And the wavering flare of the pitchlight,
That illumines your banquets no more,
Will return, like a wandering witchlight,
And encrimson the fancies of yore—
When you danced the "Old Arkansas" gaily
In brogans that had followed the bear,
And quaffed the delight of Castaly
From the fiddle that wailed like despair;
And so lightly you wrought with the hammer,
And so truly with axe and with plow,
And you blazed your own trails through the grammar,
As the record must fairly allow;
But you builded a state in whose arches
Shall be carven the deed and the name,
And posterity lengthen its marches
In the glow of your honor and fame!

THE WIZARD OWL

A New Year's Story in Rhyme

In Portland's far heroic day,
When forest firs disputed sway,
While but a mythic spear was set
To show where spires would glimmer yet,
And all a city's grace and sheen
Arise o'er conquered ranks of green,
A little lonely cabin stood
Within the border of the wood.

Lowly it was, but not unsightly,
For sombre firs, erect and knightly
A marvellous dark background lent
To cabin rude and roving tent,
And in those bold, free-handed days
Of earnest toil and homely ways,
When no tall mansion rose to shut
The sunlight from the meanest hut,
The dweller here might chance to be
The lordliest of the strong and free.

Yet 'twas not thus; almost unknown,
He dwelt there quietly alone,
A youth of manners smooth and mild,
Who all his waking hours beguiled
With books or gun and rod, and ne'er
Seemed bent on other work or cheer.

The smoke that curled in wreaths of blue
Above his chimney's ragged flue
Was typical of peace within,
A life devoid of care and sin,
And those strange dreams his fancy wove
Beneath the whispers of the grove
When slow winds swept the trees, and bore
Sad music down the wooded shore.

On many a fragrant summer day
When Hood, exultant in his sway,
Swung to the sky his golden shield,
As if to call the battle-steeled

To hew the wilderness, and build
The empire from creation willed,
The dreamer in his door would stand,
And gaze upon the river's strand
Until his thoughts would soar and soar
Into the future dim and hoar.
Then in a vision he could see
Pale shadows of the things to be;
And in the city built of mist,
Afloat in tender amethyst,
His own great mansion spread and towered,
And lo! its portal, lotus-flowered
Foretold a lulling life of ease
Amid delightful harmonies;
And then he turned and saw the town
Along the river straggling down,
And sought his cabin with a sigh
To dream of far futurity!
He could not see what force could change
That park of stumps, a rude Stonehenge,
And that wild forest sighing deep
O'er centuries so long asleep,
Into the city he had seen
Portrayed on Fancy's lofty screen.

But they who toiled with hand and brain
To open avenues of gain,
And lay the keels and weave the sails
Which some day, with fair Fortune's gales,
Should bring them honor, wealth and ease
From o'er the dim unresting seas,

Had little time to think of one
Who stood from all the strife apart,
And so, alike in rain and sun,
Kept to their tasks with loyal heart;
While he among them came and went,
Approving still their bold intent,
But too half-hearted to begin
The life that lives, the deeds that win.
Time sped, and on a New Year's night,
When all the stars were sprinkling light
In showers of radiant golden rain
Upon the wheeling world again,
And mists, like scarfs of pearl, were laid
Upon the mountains' armor-braid,
The dreamer, by his lonely fire,
Grew mournful over thoughts of home,
And wondered that a vain desire
Had ever led his steps to roam.
"But life is full of waste and folly,
Away with weary melancholy!"
He cried, and filled the glass whose rays
Are crimson with the art that slays,
And drank to all things good and fair,
To happy, happy other days,
Dim vanishing down Memory's stair.

Once on a listless summer day
A hapless owl became his prey
As, gun in hand, in idle mood,
He loitered in the shady wood.
This bird, alive, and passing well,

And rife with bloody passions fell,
Portrayed in cruel beak and grip,
He thus in classic faith had borne
Unto his cabin hearth forlorn,
For mystical companionship.
So, on this night of lonely longing,
While shadows of the past were thronging
With many a mute and wan reproof,
Upon a table, half in shade,
The owl, with all his eyes arrayed,
To dulling slumber still aloof,
Discreetly sat, as if he too
Saw ghosts of things in long review.
Under the great firs' tasselled tent,
When dusk had come and dews were sprent,
Again he plied his gory trade;
Soft as a whisper in the dark
He flitted swiftly to his mark,
And there was not a sound to tell
What helpless victim instant fell.

The dark-haired dreamer drank once more
A toast to pleasures gone before,
Then from the headstones of the past,
In rain and sunshine fading fast,
Turned to the coming time to grace
The portent of its misted face.
What could he see in that dark glass?
Only his pale conjectures pass,
The old procession of his dreams,
Fabrics of fleeting shades and beams

Which drifted evermore away
Before the Present's stern array—
The stumps and canyons, and the town
By fair Willamette straggling down.
Thus fitfully, as Fancy soared,
He darkly guessed and deeply pored
Until unto himself he said,
"It may be, in dim years ahead!
But oh, the waiting! who shall say
How many years must roll away
Before this mountain camp shall be
A mistress of the sail-swept sea,
Waving her sinewy, jewelled hands
In empire over boundless lands?"
A gurgling flow of elfish laughter
Echoed from rough log wall to rafter,
A sound the trav'ller hears with dread
In gloomy firs high overhead,
When night and forest shake his soul
With terror all beyond control.
Startled, the moody dreamer turned,
And lo! upon him glared and burned
The owl's wide eyes, commingled rays
Of yellow, purple, chrysoprase,
Burned deep, burned wide, as ne'er before,
As with Dodona's awful lore,
When muffled kings sought her dark ways.
"Aha! Those eyes that must have slept
When Hector bled and Priam wept
Are luminous this New Year's night
And I am vainly asking light,"

He softly said, then paling, faltered,
As one who with the unseen paltered;
For, as when vapors black and gray
From lilied dawn are swept away,
A filmy curtain seemed to fade
From mind and soul, and in those eyes,
Lustrous with mighty destinies
And flames of life, unfixed, unmade,
He saw the wondrous Future rise;—
Swiftly in panoramic view,
The old times were displaced by new:
The crested firs went down like knights
Lance-struck in ringing olden fights,
And all the century-furrowed land,
The church, the school, the court, the mart,
Temples of pleasure, toil and art,
With glimmering spires and gleaming domes,
Were set in landscape bright with homes—
He saw the swarm of men like bees,
The building of the pillared quays,
The lordly ships with canvas furled,
From seas that roll around the world,
The thronging river craft that broke
The lucid wave in spray and smoke;
And from converging ways, strange steeds,
With trailing plumes and shining mail,
Flying in answer to the hail
Of wider action, swifter needs;
He saw a city throned and shining,
And fairer than his best divining
In any roseate revery—

A city in its regal power;
Glowing and crescent, proud and free.
All this with hints of things aside,
The theatre of action wide;—
The sable smoke of border wars,
With hecatombs to stormy Mars—
The sudden sparkling in the sun
Of towns beginning and begun—
Cleaving of mountains and fierce air
Tossing the brown earth everywhere.

Then from those wondrous eyes the fire
Went out; he saw the flame expire;—
Then pausing with a flush elate,
He lightly murmured, "I shall wait!"
And once again from wall to rafter
Echoed the gurgling elfish laughter.
But when he looked, the wise-eyed owl,
With whom his life was cheek by jowl,
There in the firelight's fitful play,
Sat bleakly staring, calm and gray.

The Old Year's closed and finished book
Was shrined among the scrolls of Fame;
Splendid in robes of gold and azure,
And all untried in toil and pleasure,
The New Year to his empire came,
And from his diamond sceptre shook
An all resplendent virgin flame.
The dreamer, with an inward smile,
Looked over gorge and stump and tree,

And clothed them radiantly the while
In purple-misted destiny.
His ways change not; why should he toil
When other forces heaped the spoil?
He would evade the primal curse,
For there was money in his purse
To bide the day, foretold to come,
When that forbidding slope should bloom
With rose and myrtle and the glory
Of life's exultant, changing story.
The sapient bird he kept, and none
His matchless secret ever won;
And so the years rolled on and on
Through dusky twilight to the dawn,
And through its silvery, rising arch,
To day's illumined, joyful march.
'Tis New Year's night again, the earth
Is radiant o'er the royal birth,
With star-drift and the flower of pearl:
A robe of beauty and of light
Around its wintry dusk to-night
The woven snow-flakes softly furl.
Bowed down in helplessness and gloom,
A lodger in a squalid room
Sits brooding by a rusted stove,
In which a low fire, brooding, too,
Drops into ashes, pale and rue,
For some bird-haunted breezy grove.
And in that bent and mournful form,
Drooping to keep its thin blood warm—
Those matted locks of iron gray,

That sad and worn and wrinkled face—
The feeble semblance you can trace
Of one who knew another day;
And, gray and tattered, like his master,
With solitude and chill disaster,
A quaint old owl, still staring wide,
Sits on a table at his side.
Through all the long eventful years,
Rainbowed with joys, bedewed with tears,
The man had kept his tryst with fate,
True to his saying, "I shall wait."
His purse and little stint of land
Had vanished all, an idle hand
And dreaming brain, that builded fair
Its gorgeous tableaux in the air,
But never in its mazy coil
Had fixed the ritual of toil;
And yet in all his dreary waiting,
And vexed with troubles past relating,
He had maintained the wizard bird
Though unillumined and unheard.
To-night the rounded fateful time
Was trilling to its silvery chime,
For all the vision of the past,
In glorious truth arose at last—
A queenly city on her throne
Ruled where the olden firs made moan,
But what was that to him? He stood
Without the gates in solitude,
A haunting shadow of the meed
That answers manhood's ringing creed;

For Time may come with gems and flowers,
But lo! they are not always ours!

He raised his head, the gray bird's gaze
Kindled with deep prophetic blaze,
And with a flush of glad surprise
The master peered in those wild eyes,
Fading again to filmy veil,
And there, as in a desert pale,
He saw himself in rags and woe—
Only himself—deserted, lone,
And closed his eyes no more to know,
His life-long vigil closed and done;
And o'er him gurgled elfish laughter—
The owl's last rite—no more hereafter!

PORTLAND

But yesterday, and sombre firs
Thronged here—the kingly chroniclers
  Of lapsing and lethean time,
And day, in golden armor drest,
Swept through the gates of East and West,
And night, with many a silv'ry sail,
Led by the moon, serene and pale,
  Rode the blue seas of space sublime.

Dreamy and dark, the forest trees
Trembled with potent prophecies,
  And spread broad palms in mystic sign,
As in his slender carved canoe,

Skimming the waters swift and true,
The Indian passed, sad-browed and calm,
As if his spirit drank the balm
Breathed by an ancient holy shrine.

Flinging a spray of jewels bright,
With changing stroke from left to right,
He saw the shadow of his plume
Floating in pride where twin keels kist
In swinging spheres of amethyst,
And lilies waving fragrant bells
Across the lips of fainting swells
By broidered shores of song and bloom.

On fair Willamette's bosom, yet
Sweet with unsullied violet,
Portentous lights and shadows played;
And waking in the vesper breeze
With music as of marching seas,
The firs, of priestly mien austere,
Waved their wild harps with gestures drear,
And sang of destinies delayed.

At dawn, on yonder royal hill,
The crested deer, a monarch still,
Looked forth upon a matchless realm,
As wide and wild as ocean's breast
Tossed in a fury of unrest,
And thus struck still, eternal, grand—
A tempest of untrodden land
Bowing to Hood's refulgent helm!

It was but yesterday, and lo!
Forests have passed, and church spires glow
  Where dryads roved in days before—
As if the wildwood's tangled screen,
Mask of mystery unseen,
Had fallen in a single night
And left a pearl of life and light
  Glim'ring on this enchanted shore.

Thus in her coronal of hills,
Where Hybla dew of health distils,
  The gem of sunset land has sprung—
Brightly, as in Arabian Nights,
Rose a city of all delights—
The river, like a scarf of gold,
Clasping her beauty, manifold,
  And purple mysteries 'round her flung.

And north and south, as free winds blow,
A thousand smoke-plumes float and flow
  Over the city's pulsing life—
Over resplendent street and square
And the long tumult swelling there—
The low, light laughter, and the wail
Of rose-wreathed lips, and lips all pale
  From wounds struck deep in fate's full strife.

Lo, where the yellow panther crept,
And the long shadows darkly slept,
  Our love crowns life, and death crowns love,
And pride of gold and pomp of power

Hold the high sway of one short hour—
And wan fates weave their threads and keep
The annals of the years that sleep,
  Sorrow and joy in one web wove.

Honor to thee, O civic queen,
Throned in a plumy storm of green,
  A lifted lustre, starry white!
Honor and wealth! And on thy brow
Blossom the wreath of virtue's vow—
The fields give tribute, and the gales
Waft thee tall ships and costly bales
  Till high Hood flame a last good-night!

LAUNCHING OF THE BATTLESHIP OREGON

O ship, like crested Pallas armed,
O bride the hoary god hath charmed,
Leap to his proud and strong embrace,
In Freedom's squadron take thy place!

Northward, in sheen of crystal mail,
  A scarf of cloud upon his breast,
Our mountain monarch, Hood, will hail
  The mighty daughter of the West;
And hail with broad, uplifted shield,
The sea, thy home and battle-field,
While the vast hosts of phalanxed firs
Swell the deep song of worshippers.

Hood's brow of prescience, wreathed with dreams,
The mist through which his grandeur gleams
In storm and calm, has brooded o'er
The hardy few that erstwhile came
And wrought in tears, and blood and flame,
That stripes might stream and stars might soar,
And lustrous shine thy chosen name.

Launched on the golden-gated bay,
Be thine a royal bridal day;
And with the waves' exultant kiss
Come dreams of olden Salamis,
When Greece was life's white morning star;—
Come, welcome to a scene like this,
The memories of Trafalgar,
And Erie's crash of thunder, telling
How Perry's warrior heart was swelling;—
Come, through the sombre dusk of years,
Decatur's drum-beat in Algiers,
Come, echoing from a frosting lip,
That whisper, "Don't give up the ship!"

To greet thy nuptials here behold,
While o'er enchanted streams and woods
October's misty splendor broods,
Our forests lit with lamps of gold,
And many a leafy mountain shrine,
Dashed with the red autumnal wine,
For thee a symbol and a sign
Of fates serene and trust untold.

O, swift and strong and terrible,
  Go forth to guard our cherished shore
Till all thy fated days are full
  And War's hoarse call is heard no more!
Go forth, O warder of the free,
And peerless may thy vigil be,
Till cape and bay and cliff and crag
Flash with the glory of the flag
Triumphant yet on land and sea!
And O, guard well the gleaming strand
Of this, our fair Arcadian land,
  Won in the storms of years gone by,
With drain of heart and wound of hand,
  When man could dare, and do, and die!

Be worthy of the mystic name
  These matchless vales and mountains bear;
That in the tents of sunset Fame
  May twine a wreath for thee to wear.
And when thy flag shall kiss the breeze
Of these, our blue northwestern seas,
Lo, white and strange and soaring high
In the vast temples of the sky,
The peaks our lisping children know
A welcoming to thee will glow!

Helen's to Hood will pass the sign,
And Jefferson, with brow benign,
  Will signal to the Sisters Three
That the long watch was not in vain;

For lo, upon the radiant main
  The mailed patrol of liberty!
  Here, at the mighty ocean gate,
Columbia, in his pride, will greet
The Boadicea of our fleet;
And from embattled heights the voice
Of cannon make the deep rejoice,
And festal sunshine gleam upon
The green, glad hills of Oregon,
  Thine and our own deep-bosomed State.

Memories of the West

RED LACY

The moon on the blue of her star-dimpled sea,
Sailed grandly above us that night as we sped,
And the driver uncurled the last loop of his lash
At the grays in the swing,—how they sprang at its
flash!
As the horses, all six, with their plumes in the
breeze,
Were away with a musical rhyme in their tread!

Away, and away, with a sparkle of fire,
That was struck in the tempest of iron and steel—
Away, with a tossing of helmeted heads,
As wild as the waves when the sails are in shreds,—
Away—with a glimmer of buckle and tire,
With the road flashing under like fate from a reel!

And the trees gave a hurried good-night as we raced,
While the mountains were stormily billowing by,
And the mystical pageant of midnight unrolled,
As the stars clinked their goblets of crystal and gold.
It was god-like and glorious, a life spilled in haste
With the spirit aflame and the blood dashing high.

There is nothing like this, to be hurled through the night,
When the passionate bosom of summer is veiled
In a moon-misted dream, and the flowers, asleep,
Are exhaling their souls in the luminous deep.
To be hurled by swift steeds in a musical flight,
To awaken the world, and be beckoned and hailed.

But to sit with Red Lacy, the princeliest whip!
Of all the bold drivers renowned in the West,
Was the prize of all travel, unique and alone,
As you saw the stars reel when the silk lash was thrown,
And the beauty of night was as sweet on your lip
As the starry champagne that the gods love the best.

It was mine, was the prize, on that night of all nights!
I quaffed the delight of a magical ride,
As we swept down the grades like a fragment of storm,
Belated, and spurred by a frantic alarm;
And the shade of the lowland, the sheen of the heights
Were as spectres that danced in the petulant tide.

And the driver at intervals merrily sang
Of the faithful in love and the daring in war,
Till the canyons were wild with the echoes they bore

And the owl in his bower forgot to deplore,—
It was mirth—it was madness—the glad coursers sprang
To the time of his chorus, away and afar.

But a skeleton shadow, a thread of romance
Were involved in the texture of Red Lacy's past.
'Twas a sorrowful story, so old and so true
Of the orange wreath changed to a chaplet of rue—
Of a maiden dishonored, the spectres that dance
In the soul of a lover unfaithful at last.

Was he drinking that night? It will never be known,
For it might have been madness that kindled his eye,
And the flush of a frenzy that flamed in his cheek—
As a ship will go down with her colors a peak,
But I thought him so handsome with hair backward blown,
As he sang the wild strain of his own lullaby.

"I will show you," he said in a pause of the song,
"Where I first met the girl whom I loved long ago;
It was down in the canyon—her father lived there,
But has lately removed, and I wish I knew where—
For they say that my Maggie is dead, and—Go 'long!"
And he shook out the lash, singing sadly and low.

And so wildly and fearfully, madly we fled,
That the pines lifted hands with a sudden dismay,
While the bacchanal stars were commingled above,
As they tangled their hair in a revel of love,
And the moon, with a face like the face of the dead,
Like a storm-stricken galleon tossed on her way.

At the rim of the canyon the road sweeping down,
In a glimmer of moonlight and darkness of hell:
Will he think and draw rein? There's a smile on his face
That is mournfully sweet, for this terrible pace—
And the grays as they dash, seem to darken and drown
In the gloom of the grade they are treading so well.

It was life, it was rapture—and terrible too!
As an army with banners swung down to the fight.
When we struck the last curve of the dangerous grade
Where it dizzily dips in a region of shade,
Lo! a shape in the moonlight arose in our view,
At the edge of the road, and supernally white.

"It is Maggie, God bless her!" shrieked Lacy, and rose
With a radiant face, and a knightly salute.
And I sprang to his side, and had caught at a rein,
But the stars were all dashed, in the sphere of my brain,

And were darkened and quenched in the solemn
repose
Of the portal of death, and as cold, and as mute.

I awoke, I remembered, and brushed back the hair
From a bruise on my forehead, got up and beheld;
On the right were the grays that had gallantly led,
While the others around them lay dying or dead,
With the coach below all with the wheels in the air
Like a ship that a pitiless storm has impelled.

And there lay the driver, his head on the neck
Of a favorite wheeler before him in death—
Yet alive—and yet dying, as heroes can die,
With a tender love-light in his shadowy eye,
Yet alive and yet dying, around him the wreck
Of his home and his kingdom, his love and his faith.

And I prayed as I tenderly lifted his head
That the Father might spare him for poor Maggie's
sake;
But he looked at me gently, a smile on his lip,
As he murmured, his fingers still grasping the whip,
"It's the home station, stranger—the lights are
ahead,
I am on the down grade, and I can't reach the
brake!"

THE MOTHER'S VIGIL

The day and the year were a-dying together,
The crimson to crimson and gold unto gold,
While the pine, dropping burrs in the sweet autumn
weather,
All sadly and softly its rosary told.
We leaned on our guns, and looked over the city,
Enthroned in the days that eternally thrill;
While one stood in silence, and one hummed a ditty
Of a love that was lost, and a wheel that was still.
And there were the scars of the days of endeavor,
The ditches and reservoirs, sluices and all,
Debris of a battle, pathetic forever,
As part of the resonant age they recall;
For silence had stooped on the desolate ditches—
Save only the querulous call of the quail
A-scolding her brood, from the tunnels and pitches
To chaparral shades and the leaf-covered trail.

A silence was there, but that silence sang dirges,
O hopelessly sad to the sorrowing soul,
So hopelessly sad, like the wail of wild surges
Gone mad in the gleam of their wandering goal.
"Ah! whither," I murmured, "in chances and
changes,
Gilding or soiling, a curse or caress,
Now wanders the spoil of the gold-glutted ranges—
A crown for dishonor, a balm for distress?

The toilers, where are they, the bronzed and the knighted,
As gentle as childhood, and cruel as fire?
What hope was fulfilled, and what love was requited—
Ah! what was the fate of their kingly desire?
Lo, dirges of silence, the crested quail calling,
Answer me vaguely in mystical woe,
The glory of sunset, in benison falling,
Filled all the deserted old gulches below.

"The pick and the shovel are rusted and broken,
Faded the fires of the cabin and tent,—
The long roll has sounded, the Chieftain has spoken,
The owl sobs alone on the hills that were rent.
With a whispering sound, as of autumn robes trailing,
October is furling her banners of red,
And my heart is bowed down in the infinite wailing
That times the innumerous march of the dead."

"It is true," said my comrade, regretfully, lowly,—
"Death and expenses are all that are sure,
And we con the old lesson though hardly and slowly,
To follow and follow some fanciful lure;
But yet," and he thoughtfully levelled a finger
Over the sheen of the storm-cradled town,
"There's a smoke on yon hillside that somehow will linger,
Like a mist on the shore when the tide has gone down.

"Have you marked it—a luminous violet column
On the gold and the bronze of the frost-tinted trees—
Soaring to victory, saintly and solemn,
With the wreathed immortelles that Fidelity weaves?
It is only the smoke of a cabin so humble
The squirrels romp o'er it unchecked by reproof,
Grimy and shaky, I wonder the rumble
Of the wagons down there do not shatter its roof.

"In the tempests of years that we fain are forgetting,
When cards were religion and pistols were priests,
While the sun rode in scarlet at dawning and setting,
And a Bourbon was crowned at our funerals and feasts—
Yon oak that leans grandly, a culdee extending
His priestly hand over that ruinous cot,
Once thrilled to the shock of a ghastly descending,
And the Law was avenged with a loop and a knot.

"He was only an Indian, the son of Old Mary,
Swarthy and wild, with midnight of hair
That arose, as he sped to the Lethean ferry,
Like a raven of doom in the quivering air.
Ah, his crime? I've forgotten,—it was something or other
Judge Lynch's decisions were never compiled;—
But we left him, at last, with his forest-born mother,
As she camped by the tree that had strangled her child.

"Alone when the sombre and skeleton branches
Thrilled in the rush of the ship-wrecking storm,
And the glad little children, in hamlet and ranches,
Laughed at the ingle-side ruddy and warm;
Alone, when the sibyls of springtime, returning,
Flung over the forest an emerald mist;
And alone, when the stars of midsummer were burning,
When the musk roses dreamed of the god they had kissed.

"While the years have gone on, and the flush times have faded,
Forever the smoke of her vigil ascends,
And the oak, all the while, that poor altar has shaded,
Like a penitent soul that would make some amends.
And still, from his ashes, the dead day arises
A blossoming wonder of beauty and truth,
While the myrtle-wreathed moon in all gentle disguises
Remembers, and twines her a chaplet of ruth.

"Te Deums may roll in the gloom of old arches,
Where the white-handed preacher coquettes with his God,
But Truth finds her own in long battles and marches,
And the flowers will shine on that tear-sprinkled sod.
When the fire has gone out and the vigil is ended,
Poor Mary may sleep with the loved and the leal,

For the stars will mount guard o'er the ashes she
tended,
And the beauty of morning return there to kneel."

SHASTA JOHN

I.

The twilight deep in the canyons lay,
Like waiting columns of the night,
And, still and slow, declining Day
Withdrew on craggy ridge and height,
And o'er their clustering shafts of gold
A bannered sunset wide unrolled.

II.

And down and down, like the winding trace
Of some dead stream the sun had slain,
And wreathed its spirit of misty grace
In sailing clouds and summer rain,
Our trail, with many a fret and fall,
Went clambering down the mountain wall.

III.

"Old Shasta John was the grandest chief
The red tribes had in Oregon,—
I owe him this;" and the pale relief
Of one deep scar was traced upon
The guide's brown cheek, and his lifted hand
Touched, as in pride, the savage brand.

IV.

"You see the tree on the ridge, out there—
The fire-stripped pine, with long white arms
Stretched like a ghost in the silent air?"—
(Good Lord! a curse or pledge of harm
Seemed somewhat meant by the gesture!) "Well,
'Twas just below our Colonel fell!"

V.

"And every canyon and tumbled peak
In all this vast and lonesome land
Could tell a tale, if the dead could speak,
And point you still, with ruddy hand,
Where hapless lives, by the bullet sped,
Like shadows cross the path we tread."

VI.

And, deftly rolling a cigarette,
He rode in silent self-commune,
His tinkling spurs, as he brooded, set
To memories of some border tune;
And from the embattled heights the day
In gold and scarlet passed away.

VII.

Through paths half hid in the tangled grass,
We reined beneath a mighty fir
That stood alone, and the solemn mass
Of restless spirits seems to stir

Like rising seas in its tower of shade,
And deep and mournful music made.

VIII.

The volunteer from his saddle leapt,
And walked beside a mound of stones,
And something, that started as he stept,
Seemed to have fled the whitening bones
That lay in cumbering grass and weed,
As if to hide a stealthy deed.

IX.

"'Twas strange," he said, "that a man might die—
Die and be buried and forgot,
And yet live on like a memory
Of one whose truer life was not;
But thus, and here, on another day,
Bold Shasta's heart was laid away.

X.

"The mountain eagle that shrieks and soars
In pathless skies was like his soul:
He loved the wild of these western shores,
Where blue seas flash and shine and roll,
And all things mighty—a boundless dome,
A world of pines—a wind-swept home.

XI.

"And thus at last, when his conquered band
Were gathered down beside the sea

To dig and die on a patch of land,
And learn to spell and bend the knee,
Old Shasta sighed that his heart was dead—
He would not be in bondage led.

XII.

"So, when the moon, like a silvery bow,
Bent from the sunward peaks and shed
Its grieving beams in the gorges low,
Beneath the fir that moans o'erhead,
They brought his gun and his battle gear,
Enwrapped as on a funeral bier,

XIII.

"And laid them low in a mystic grave,
And slew his spotted steeds beside,
While to and fro like a moaning wave
That swings and sings in a troubled tide,
His maidens danced in the 'broidered shade
And sang his soul's last serenade.

XIV.

"They say the withering hand of Age
Seemed first to touch the chief that night,
And, old and strange, to his narrow cage
Down by the sea he passed from sight,
A broken heart and an empty frame—
The shadow of a mighty name!

XV.

"And who shall say that his spirit wild
Comes not again in sun or cloud,
To roam at will as a favored child,
When Shasta from his vap'rous shroud
Mutters in anger and lifts a hand
In glittering mail o'er freedom's land?"

XVI.

He ceased: and deep in the canyon's gloom
A toiling river sobbed and sung,
And like a wreath of bridal bloom
The young moon's smile on earth was flung,
And dreamy Hesper, in Heaven a-near,
Leaned, watching, on his golden spear.

THE FATE OF MISSISSIP

Here's the cabin in the hollow,
Where the neck of woods comes down;
And the fir trees nod and whisper
As they beckon us, and frown.
Ah! the throat of stick and mortar
Breathes no more the curling smoke—
And that raven, over yonder,
Has a plaintive, funeral croak!

There's the door, on broken hinges,
Leaning like a weary thing;

And the pathway, dim with grasses,
  Winding downward to the spring;
While this pyramid of antlers—
  Spoils of many a ringing chase—
Tells you of a hunter's labor
  In this lonely, lonely place.

No, not in there!—this is better,
  Where the golden sunbeams sleep;—
There are stains upon those puncheons
  That would make your muscles creep.
Sit upon this log beside me,
  And I'll tell you how it came.
Match about you? Yonder cabin
  Has a wild and fearful fame.

He was big and hairy throated,
  And his name was "Mississip;"
Rather curious mortal was he,
  And he didn't care a flip
For the frills of polished cities,
  Or the sciences and arts;
And he fled like one tormented
  From the highways and the marts.

Well, in trailing down the border,
  Here he pitched his tent, at last,
And the dogs—they sought him somehow—
  Gathered round him thick and fast.
Hound and cur, full twenty of them,
  Leaped about his open door;

And the cabin was their kennel,
  And their couch its rugged floor.

Up and down the wooded gorges,
  Ere the morning sun grew warm,
You could hear their angry chorus,
  Sweeping like a winged storm—
Till the quick snarl of his rifle,
  Downward by the river shore,
Hushed the rolling wave of clamor,
  And the gallant chase was o'er.

But the vanguard of improvement,
  With the compass and the chain,
Bivouacked along the valley,
  From the mountain to the main;
And the iron arm of Progress
  O'er the virgin wild was thrown,
And the steam-fiend shrieked and bellowed
  Where the solitude was known;
While the canyons throbbed and thundered
  With the rush of shining steeds,
As the breath of glowing nostrils
  Rolled like war-clouds o'er the meads.

Vainly, when the shadows lifted,
  And the dew was on the bush,
Mississip would wind his cow's horn
  In the morning's fragrant hush;
"Turk" would lead the tawny hunters
  To the hill-side, as of old,

But would never pitch the music,
For the tracks were dim and cold.
And full often, too, mistaking
For the horn the engine pipes,
They would wander on wild chases,
Like the foolish after snipes.

So, the useless gun was broken,
Mississip would hunt no more—
While his drooping dogs stood round him
As he ground his teeth and swore:
"This has come of that there railroad,
And I knew, when they begun,
That 'twould skeer the deer to thunder,
An' the hounds they wouldn't run!"

Then he sat within his cabin,
In a wreathing cloud of smoke,
While from hound and cur, beside him,
Oft the whine of hunger broke;
But he sat and smoked serenely,
With the famine in his eye,
Till you guessed his awful purpose,
And were sure he meant to die,
While the eye-balls, hot and glaring,
Caverned flanks, and dripping jaws,
Spoke the anguish of his hunters,
From the emptiness that gnaws;
Nearer, nearer now they circled,
With the click of gleaming fangs;—

Was't the wild beast rising in them
From the hell of hunger's pangs?
Was't the cry of dog or devil?
Mercy! what a sight was there—
Ah, the odor of that orgy
Even now must taint the air!
Eat him? Well, should rather say so—
Mississip was soon released,
And their mouths were wet and crimson
With the rich unholy feast.

Simmons, up from Sleepy Hollow,
Happened by the place one day,
And he halted, just to ask him
If his steers had been that way;
But he only reached the threshold
When he started, all aghast,
As a something, swift and noiseless,
Like a shadow, flitted past:
Dog, perhaps, but then no matter!
When he woke from terror's thrall,
He was startled by a sentence
On a board against the wall—
Mississip, no doubt, had done it,
'Twas a rude and homely scrawl,
Written with a piece of charcoal,
"Dern the Rale Road," that is all.

IN THE SISKIYOUS

A Souvenir of '56

Hither we bore him from the fight,
With whispered speech and stealthy tread;—
White, whimsical in laughing light,
The stars rode onward overhead
And many a golden plume let fall,
But took no note of us at all.

O wide and high, that night of June,
The arches of blue heaven bent,
And like a scimitar the moon
Hung o'er the West's embroidered tent;
But there was neither sound nor sign
That God was love or Heaven benign!

No sound nor sign—the Siskiyous,
Like priests of Moloch, seared with pain,
Bowed their dark heads in midnight dews
And dreamed of blood and wrath again,
With all the lurid signs that rise
Along men's stormy destinies.

We turned but once—the leaping flame
Of our own cabin waved farewell—
When upward, clanging wildly, came
The long and wavering Shasta yell;
A sound that woke the wolf's lone howl
And sobbing laughter of the owl.

Enough! The Dantean picture swung
  Crimson against the wall of gloom,
As if a dream of hell had sprung
  Starward, a lurid flash of doom;
And then, through rosebay, crushing sweet,
We bore the dead with dolor meet.

Two pines, with trophied brows, and dark
  With legendary plumes of pride,
Crowned a drear ridge, a noted mark,
  With forests storming every side—
"And here," said we, "apart, alone,
Well may he sleep, awaiting dawn."

The little mound we heaped has passed,
  A light low wave on Earth's wide breast,
And many a fleeting year has cast
  Some careless wreath to grace his rest;—
While oft the moon, in silent hours,
Has strewn his tomb with silv'ry flowers.

And that is all—save in the pale,
  Calm sky, an eagle sometimes wheels,
As mountain storms sweep by and hail
  The dead with martial thunder-peals—
The dead that wake not through the years,
That have for him no smile or tears.

So let him sleep; the savage cry
  Of border war is hushed at last,

And gleaming cities greet the sky
  That bent above the stormy past—
A past so strange and far away
It seems a dream all dim and gray.

As was his day so was his strength;
  No perfumed hero, flushed with pride:—
He hewed the way, and here, at length,
  Rolled down the mighty human tide
With civic pomp and cultured grace,
Where such as he are out of place.

Good-night! Good-night! Why dreaming stand,
  All lonely, by this lonely tomb,
And ask if that long-folded hand
  Had won a crown of fadeless bloom?
When down the trail his brave foot trod,
The pioneer went home to God!

THE SPOTTED CAYUSE

"And thereby hangs a tale"

Now the Government mule's an unprincipled steed,
  And comes as near being a genuine ass
As any that isn't exactly the breed;
  But the crookedest thing that is loose upon grass—
A demon on wheels and without an excuse,
Is an Oregon pony, they call the cayuse.

He's of Indian extraction, a savage at heart,
With an odor of camas and smoke of the camp,
He has scorned the dull life of the plough and the cart,
And is now and forever a vagabond tramp—
With a stomach so tough that he'll live and grow fat,
On a Hudson Bay blanket or a slice of old hat.

I attained a cayuse, in the days that are gone,
And I think he was rather too good for this world,
With his billowy mane, and those natty spots on,
And a tail like a pirate's black banner unfurled—
Ah, surely his like never strayed among men,
And I piously trust that 'twill never again!

He had nothing worth mention in matter of ears—
And it made him look saucy and rather unique—
For the Oregon youth chew them off, it appears,
For as long as ears last they can manage to stick,
Through the tempest of "spiking" that follows, of course,
Whenever you mount this ineffable horse.

He would wave his hind legs with a kind of war-whoop,
If I tried to approach with a rope in my hand,
And I ran till I wheezed like a babe with the croup,
But the volatile wretch would not come to a stand
Till he fell in a pit I had deftly concealed,
When he stood on his ear, and Jehu, how he squealed!

Then he fought like a tiger, and wouldn't give in
To the touch of the saddle, until he was thrown,
And choked with a chain; and it seemed like a sin,
As he limbered right out and grew still with a groan;
But his eye was half closed, and it shimmered a fire
Like a thunder cloud's fitful and treacherous ire.

And he silently swore at his menial gear
As he drooped like a butterfly rudely caressed;
And I pitied his plight, and was brushing a tear
That hung on my lashes, a traitor confessed,
When he launched out a foot with a meteor flash,
And my nose was past mending, for love or for cash.

From the uppermost rail of a very high fence
I climbed down on his back, and at first he was still,
But I wasn't kept long in a strain of suspense,
When he started—and then—there was music until
He had bucked me cross-eyed, tied my tongue in a knot,
And sowed me like salt on a ten-acre lot.

And so, reader mine, take a piece of advice,
(It has cost me four ribs and a talented nose)
The cayuse is a cure—a canary on ice,
A simoon of destruction, a tempest of woes;
He is wicked and worse—he's perpetual—well
You remember the place where the dead fiddlers dwell!

THE BALLAD OF KANGAROO

Like a golden pheasant sunning
  Upon a rugged hill,
October flaunts her plumage
  Of brown and amber still,
While the ancient mining village
  At the foot of the slope awaits,
Like a beggar rudely hustled
  From fortune's shining gates.

Preaching a solemn gospel
  From many a broken door,
While the sun checks mimic *faro*
  Upon the crumbling floor—
There was never a sadder triumph
  Of Death's imperial shade,
And never a truer poem
  Than time and tide have made.

From hollow window casements
  Destruction glares and glooms,
And the spider's musty legends
  Wave round the empty rooms,
And the crickets in the chimney
  A dry, harsh note prolong
Like a minstrel tuning vainly
  For a long-forgotten song.

Silence where life was stormy,
And sadness where hearts were gay,
A court of desolation,
And a kingdom of decay;
The camp once crowned with conquest
Now pays its vassal dues,
While all the bannered seasons
March o'er the Siskiyous.

The sallow and slant-eyed mongrel,
A ghoul among the dead,
Glides here and there in silence,
With ghostly shaven head,
And the horrible dank flavor
We know, but dread to name,
Old mortality *warmed over*,
And age after age the same!

Sit with me on the doorstep
Of the classic "Belvidere"
While we challenge all the shadows
That claim admission here;
For they come again at evening
In noiseless masquerades,
To quaff their dim potations
And flush their nasal shades.

Again they swear, in whispers,
Again revolvers gleam,
As they stab and shoot serenely,
Like the phantoms of a dream,—

And the typic man for breakfast
Is laid aside to cool
Under the billiard table,
Red-hot with whiskey pool.

Again the fantastic fiddle
Inspires colossal boots,
And the royal double shuffle
Is done by spectral mutes,—
Again they swing their partners,
And the tameless camas lends
Its breath to culture's cocktail,
As the music sways and blends.

It was thus, at times, that Bacchus,
The rosy god and fair,
With wreathen, magic thyrsus
Invoked wild revel there;
But above his satyr-dances,
The golden purple gone,
The high patrician pleasures
Around the camp were thrown.

For many a bloomy maiden
The mountain ranches gave
To grace the Olympic banquets
And crown the free and brave,
And the knights of storied gulches,
Undecked of plume or sword,
Went dashing down the middle
With the girls their hearts adored.

There was one called "Judge," a sinner,
Unknown to Coke or Kent,
Unless those lofty spirits
With ruby "smashes" blent:
"Here's the Judge," they said sedately,
"Here's old Constitutional Law"—
And they left him knotty questions
Of "euchre," "sledge" or "draw."

They had a favored preacher,
The Reverend Mr. Colt,
From firstly up to sixthly
An ethical thunderbolt:
"Handy," they said, "at funerals,"
And weddings they seldom had,
Although the census flourished
Spontaneously bad.

Perhaps 'twas a flower of fancy,
A freak of sentiment,
To invoke the grisly shadow
In the miner's merry tent,—
Or a subtle and sage opinion
That something must be done
To anchor the camp in hist'ry
And give it business tone;—

For they gave the Lord his acre,
A quaint, off-hand affair,
In the shade of the yellow willows
On the rocky flat down there;

And many a careless miner,
With a hole in his shirt of gray,
Was borne there, mute and gory,
From the quick and deadly fray.

They were followers of fortune,
And slept in their boots at last,
All ready to waltz to glory
At Gabriel's final blast;
They played high stakes, and lost them,
Just held the cards to "stand,"
And they passed their chips, like Christians,
When Death raised a cold top hand.

But now the famous gulches,
From the Spanish to Bamboo,
Are but yawning emptinesses
Round the wreck of Kangaroo,—
With gleaming, grand golgothas
Of tailings, heap and heap,
Where the miner's sturdy rocker
Put the "yellow boys" to sleep.

The days go on as ever,
The birds sing in their time,
And the clear, untroubled waters
Resume their golden chime;
But the strong, rude throng of toilers,
The few that now remain,
Are scattered from here to limbo,
O'er many a land and main.

Rosebay and manzanita,
With a cheerful red and green,
Have woven o'er the hillsides
A bright and pretty screen;
And those by the willows sleeping
Would never wake nor swear,
If the hated Chinese lingo
Did not cruise along the air.

The roaring days are over,
The golden sands have run,
The fiddler has his guerdon,
While the boys have had their fun;
But there were pay-streaks of manhood
In their bold hearts, we know,
Down close to the solid bed-rock,
And not for surface show.

MEMALUSE ISLAND

[This island lying in the Columbia River has since time immemorial been the burying ground of the Indians.]

Where the King of Hesperian rivers,
Columbia, with glimmering sweep,
And a passionate bosom that quivers
In a dream of the mystical deep,
Exults in his empire eternal
And the myriad rush of his waves,
Is an island of sadness supernal—
A desolate kingdom of graves;

And its eagles are pallid and holy,
And they circle above it so slowly—
  Like the wraiths of its guardian braves!

An Avalon fair as that other
  Where the lances of Camelot rest—
The King and each chivalrous brother
  With the plumage of fame on his crest—
Is the isle of our bountiful river,
  In its calm, where commotion is rife,
Like a finger of warning forever
  On the querulous lips of life;
While the waters around it intoning
Go sadly and mingle their moaning
  With a resonant pæan of strife.

And a magical scene for its story
  Around you enchants and appalls
With the barbarous gloom and the glory
  Of the bold and embattled walls,
Where the host of the waters, advancing
  Through the shadowy æons of time,
Has resoundingly marched by the glancing
  Of innumerous arms sublime;—
While a whimsical legend has faltered
On its grandeur undimmed and unaltered—
  And passed like a hurrying mime!

As the firs, with their banners uplifted,
  Are delayed like an army in prayer,

While the vapors of battle are drifted
In the gloom of their Gothic hair,
And a mountain in mail uprising,
The Attila of Oregon lands,
Seems to stand like a chieftain advising
With his fierce and untamable bands,
And to menace the vales that serenely
Repose by Willamette, the queenly
Protectress of cereal lands.

In the days that have faded to gloaming,
In the plaintive traditional years,
'Twas the end of a marvellous roaming,
A retreat from avenging spears.
It was there—when the moon was at setting,
And the shadows were solemn and strange—
While the peaks, in their silvery fretting,
Were the priests of a ghostly range,
That the fleets came weirdly sailing
With the songs of the dirge, and the wailing
Of the dark immemorial change.

For the warrior, all crimson from battle,
And the maid, with her lingering smile,
As the child that had worshipped the rattle
Of the arrows—were borne to the isle!
And they died in a fate as uncertain
As the flickering, funeral glare
Of the torches that painted the curtain
Of the sorrowing midnight air:—
But the silent and sailing eagle

Was the guard of a slumber as regal
As the Parian marbles declare.

And the muttering, terrible thunder
Has recoiled from its reverent shore,
And the lightnings have passed in their wonder
With their sabres just flashing o'er!
While the Winters have crowned it so rarely
With the wreath of the shimmering snows,
That the sun, in returning, might fairly
Have neglected its kingly repose,
Where the dark and disconsolate water,
With its chant of the chase and the slaughter,
Like a lullaby flows and flows.

And the Spring never comes, with the daisies
In the glow of her bivouac,
But she lingers about it, and raises
A memorial arch on her track.
And the beautiful mists that surround it
With a lustre of beaded brows
Are renewing the flowers that found it
With the dew of their nightly vows;
While so tenderly passes the river,
With the braid of the sun on his quiver,
That the slumberers never arouse.

The romance of the red man is ended,
And the shade of his primitive bark,
With the mists of eternity blended,
Is a part of its dusk and its dark;

And the spray of the thundering steamer
  Is the glist of our loftier dream,
And the plume of its vapory streamer.
  But a shadow of things that seem;
For the highway of trade and of science
Is only a trail and a reliance
  For the wants that confusedly teem.

And I hear, in the song of the river,
  As it washes the funeral isle,
The response of this song—which is ever
  The prophetic refrain of the Nile;
"O the lands may be braided together
  And the East lend its rose to the West,
But the nations will pause and ask whether
  The rewards they have sought are the best;
For the sands of the desert blow over
And the ashes of centuries cover
  Imperial Thebes with the rest.

"While the kingdoms have gone like the shadows
  That are thrown on the flowering grass
When the cloudlets wing over the meadows
  With a tremulous kiss as they pass,
I have listened to love and to laughter,
  I have mourned with the nations in tears,
But the heart has not changed, nor hereafter
  Will it change in the cycles of years;
And the mansions of thought that are builded,
What are they but cloud that is gilded—
  To the soul with its sorrow and fears?

"And alas for thy daring, O mortal!
Since the dead must go down to the dead,
If thy prescience shall darken the portal
Where the lustres eternal are shed;
For thy path may ascend to the planets,
And away to the fountains of light
In disdain of the earth and the granites
Where thy fortunes are builded aright;
But thy science—all wingless and broken—
Shall return, and with never a token
Of its long and delirious flight!"

AT LINNTON'S SHAMBLES

[At Linnton, a village on the Willamette, is located an abattoir, where herds of Oregon cayuses are introduced through the canning route to the quartermasters of the armies of the world.]

With its blue seas afoam and its islands aglow
And the continents loud with the clamor of life,
O, whither, O, whither, as dim cycles flow,
Careereth the earth with its passion and strife?
As if lost in the night, to each other we call,
With lips moist with kisses or pallid with fear;
But out of the dark comes no answer at all,
No solace from oracle, prophet or seer.

We are far from the highway; our landmarks are lost,
And the stars reel above us in glimmering dance,

While our bacchanal torches, in high revel tossed,
Portray that in darkness and doubt we advance;
Half God and half beast, we achieve what we dare,
Defy every law in a rapture of sin—
Then away to our fanes with our hot bosoms bare,
As if scourging and shrieking nepenthe might win!

Alas, it was yesterday only I saw
How surely that people are drifting astray,
From dreams that were cherished, from loves that were law,
And out o'er the battlements swarming away;
For at Linnton, down there where the shimmering tide
Of the great river sweeps to the hoarse-calling sea,
Low singing, its murmur of anguish to hide,
Are the red, reeking shambles the strange times decree.

A herd of wild horses, with streaming, tossed manes,
In a grass field anear were disporting at will,
For the blood of Arabia throbbed in their veins,
As they swept like a storm round the slope of the hill.
They were exiles from uplands beyond the Cascades,
The pampas of sagebrush and bunchgrass their home,
Where only the stealthy coyote invades
And the juniper scents the wild pastures they roam.

How glad were their gambols along the rich fields
In the glory of sunlight that thrilled the grass seas,
For the beauty and ardor that sweet freedom yields
Were theirs, as they raced with the sun and the breeze;
For the strain of the racers had moulded their limbs
And arched their proud necks with a thunderous might
Which flamed in their nostrils, whose tremulous rims
Expanded and quivered with royal delight.

O, that life of the plains! the jubilant rush
Of the unbitted steeds on the deep-rooted turf,
Like the mad waves careering when storms wake the hush
Of the slumbering ocean in billow and surf;
How they leaped in their pride, how their black banners streamed;
For the world was still young in the original waste—
The dim mountain vistas with glamour bedreamed,
And the wind and the waters exultant and chaste.

In time the young rev'lers must yield to the rein
And their beauty and vigor inure to men's needs,
For the splendor and dash of the life of the plain
Is the glowing romance that preludes after-deeds.
But hark! from the tumult of cities is borne
On the bland morning breezes, the rumble and roar

Of the steam-car and trolley—ah! let us mourn,
For the dutiful day of the courser is o'er.

And hearken! With ominous whisper and hum,
The gleaming road-eagles, the motor-cars, pass,
And the horse bows his head with disaster o'ercome,
For his destiny's over, alas and alas!
And now in this pasture at Linnton behold
The herd that is doomed for the shambles hard by,
With October's clear sunlight of mellowest gold
On their handsome coats playing and kindling each eye.

They dreamed not of fate, how the cannibal man
Would requite the devotion of glorious years—
Put sentiment, honor and worth in a "can,"
With hardly the grace of reptilian tears.
O! shades of Bucephalus, splendid in war,
Of the steeds that bore Sheridan into the fight,
And to love's consummation the young Lochinvar,
Are we smitten with madness, incurable blight?

Arise, Rozinante, bring Quixote again,
Bold champion of maidens and scourger of wrong,
Let him ride down the crazy delusions of men
And deliver the weak from the tyrannous strong.
O valor and beauty, and battle and love,
Shall the ghouls have the horse and no hades have them,

Whom the stars, as they clash their gold lances above,
And the winds and the waves in their anger condemn?

May Pegasus fiery, from Castaly's stream,
Drive hideous nightmares to rend their repose
Till their very hair stiffens in struggles to scream,
As the pale horse shall bear them to Stygian woes.

A LEGEND OF ARIZONA

In the region of chartless land that lies
Far off in a dream of Hesperian skies;
By the rivers that, drifting golden lees,
Bear beauty and song to the Mexic seas—
I have sat in the miner's bivouac
When night with its stars like a psalm unrolled,
And heard, as he leaned on his grimy pack,
A miner discourse on the Mount of Gold.

While the howl of the wolf was faint and far,
As the moon, like a ship, from star to star
Sailed on—and the plain, with a sea-like sweep,
Lay silent and wide in its mystic sleep;
And the river below in an undertone
Hummed sweetly, and, chiming its cymbals, sang
Of a sorrowful land that spreads alone
Where oceans have marched and the old wars rang.

And the glorified peaks stood high and white,
Like Kings that were called to the Courts of Night;
And the voices of mystery seemed to swell
On the wind in the pines as it rose and fell;
For thus near the pulsing throbs of earth
The tale of the miner was fitly told—
With never a sneer or a sound of mirth
From those who had battled and toiled for gold.

The Mountain of Gold was said to stand
Away in the depths of a solemn land
Which the rivers forget as they bend afar
On the glimmering track of the evening star;
While ever, like dust of the unhallowed dead,
The sands of the desert arise in clouds,
And gather and sweep with a ghostly thread
Around it, and rustle like dreary shrouds.

And a skeleton guard of mountain bleak,
Where the brown vulture dozes and whets his beak,
Defends it, and hoards within grizzly arms
The dazzle of splendor and virgin charms
That no one has seen but those priests of the sun
Who fled from the sword of the Spanish knight,
And whose shadows still, when the day is done,
Kneel there on the steps of their altar bright!

The gold was sought, but the seeker lost;
And his ashes are wearily, wearily tossed
With the sands as they drift in eternal unrest

As if ever astray in the hopeless quest,—
  While a glamour of mystery strangely shines
Where the dead have been strewn and the living
      stray,
  And the gorges are rich with exhaustless mines
That hoard their treasure unto this day
Untouched, as our hearts and hopes decay.

And the robber Apache hovers far
On the thundering chase o'er the trail of war,
As the shark of the desert, gaunt and gray,
Slips by like a shade to his distant prey;
  Yet waiting for all, on the yellow breast
Of the dead and desolate waste, the prize
  Of the Mountain of Gold is said to rest
Like a star that has dropped from the gracious
      skies;—

Perhaps it is only a miner's theme—
The glint of some old explorer's dream;
As clouds in the magical sunset shine,
Like islands of silver in seas of wine—
But may he not think, when the placer fails,
And poverty lurks on the olden trails,
That treasures barbaric and joy untold
Are shining beyond in the Mountain of Gold?

Occasional Poems

HAEC OLIM MEMINISSE JUVABIT

PLANTING OF THE PINE

[Read June 17, 1895, at the Willamette University on occasion of planting the class tree.]

"And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of waters."—PSALM i, 2.

Wave, Hermes, wave thy wreathen wand,
  And call the exiled gods once more
From dreamful lands that lie beyond
  The wailing Acherontic shore,—
The ever-young and ever-fair,
Whose leafy brows and wave-swept hair
The laureled minstrels, blithe and fond,
  Sang in sweet numbers o'er and o'er.

Satyr and nymph and oread call,
  And all the race of rugged Pan,
By streams that weave the madrigal,
  Through groves Sabean breezes fan.
Lure them, O Hermes! with the shell
Which breathed of old a magic spell
That made the Argus eyelids fall,
  And loosed the Argive maiden's ban!

So lead them hither, let them move
  Among us on this festal day,
Mystic as shadows in a grove
  Where tressy gleams of sunshine stray,
And seen alone by those who keep
Pale watches with the bards that sleep
In the bright garlands genius wove
  When Greece was young and gods held sway.

Listen! there is a stir of leaves,
  And rustling, as of flowers strewn,
And wildwood odors from the sheaves
  Of bloomy verse, all blent and blown;—
Naiads and dryads—all are here,
And fauns that whisk the furry ear,
And many a reed-led chorus grieves
  O'er days discrowned and fanes o'erthrown.

And now their breezy murmurs hail
  The planting of the votive pine:—
Demeter spreads a damask veil,
  The handmaid spills an opal wine;
Since days were born and years began,
The pine was sacred unto Pan,
And not a mystic rite shall fail
  To greet this scion of the line.

Lo, it is done! The beauteous throng
  With sylvan whispers slowly parts—
Sweet as a fading wave of song
  That lingers in enraptured hearts

When nights are still, and moonlight falls
On arches gray, on broken walls,
And every thought that drifts along
A tint of waning life imparts.

A scent of myrtle, rose and myrrh,
And ivy brows and musky hair
Floats faintly by, and now the stir
Of Fancy shakes the perfumed air:—
And o'er the blue Hellenic seas
The burning clouds of mysteries
Sail on, and waft the worshipper
To shrines that glimmer everywhere.

For Youth is all devout and Greek,
A dreamer, crescent-browed and curled,
To whom woods, winds and waters speak
The language of a poet's world;
So we to classic shades invoke,
With speech, and song, and altar smoke,
The glory of a race antique
While yet our waiting sail is furled.

Around our isle of dreamland lies
The sweep of beryl-bosomed seas,
And Hera's gold and purple skies
Stoop over it;—the languid breeze
Loiters with laughter's rippling tone,
And music fading into moan,
'Mid waves, with sensuous sweet sighs,
The bannered beauty of the trees.

To past and future, lo! we raise
A green memorial and a fane;
There glowing nymphs and sheeny fays
Shall sleep in moonlight's silver rain,
And floating sun and shadow play
When we are sailing far away—
Sailing the sapphire straits and bays
That sparkle round Life's rocky main.

No marble monolith is ours,
Nor granite from the Syenic caves,
No weary Sphinx whose dark brow lowers
Where gray sand drifts in arid waves;
But, from its mountain home, the pine
A living monument doth shine,
That breathes an odor rich as flowers
When they are laid in wintry graves.

All honor to the sylvan race,
The beautiful, erect and free!
They stood in Eden's glow and grace,
And Life and Death were named a tree!
Their beauty was a sacrament,—
At once a temple and a tent;
The tree was man's first dwelling-place
And sang his parting threnody.

They left their decorated crests
In Homer's song and Holy Writ,
And Prophecy beneath them rests
When all the boding stars are lit;—

All down the columned years they stand
In robes of splendor and command—
Ambassadors of high behests
  While rosy summers flame and flit.

Beneath a date-grove's pleasant shade,
  At Elim Israel reposed
And under oaks of Mamre laid
  The wandering of Abram closed;
And dark Deborah, weird and calm,
Near Ramah sat beneath her palm,
And in perspective thought arrayed
  The fates by Israel's god imposed.

The Druid and Dodona oaks,
  How gloomily their arms extend
Above the pagan altar smokes
  That priest and priestesses attend!
How waves the windy beech that grows
Hard by the Scæan gate, and throws
A plaintive shade, while shouts and strokes
  Storm on till epic thunders end!

Again Olympian gods are met
  In robes that sweep and shine like flame,
And lo, Athene's olive, set
  In Attic soil, has given a name
To Athens; and we turn, and lo,
Where Babylonian waters flow,
Hushed harps, on willows hung, are wet
  With tears of sorrow and of shame!

Enough! The glory of the trees
In every age of fate fulfils,
And moves through all the harmonies
Of speech that soars and song that thrills,
And round this fair memorial
'Tis fit that we these names should call,
Who give to sun and cloud and breeze
A native monarch of our hills.

Oh, proudly in the Siskiyous
His princely tribes arise and reign,
And get delight of summer dews
And strength of winter's toiling strain—
While bright Madroñes, at their side,
Like courtly princesses abide
And tell the scarlet beads they use
As symbols of a passion slain.

All round the varied forest sweeps
A cloud of changing loveliness,
Where June's adorning sunlight sleeps
On gleamy boughs of braided tress,
And rosebay lights the leafy gloom
With torches of auroral bloom,
And the live panther, lurking, creeps
With footsteps soft as a caress.

And there, like some barbaric king,
All mailed in bronze-red dragon scales,
The pine tree towers—right glad to fling
His royal ensigns to the gales,

And, in his robes of golden green
That glisten with a vibrant sheen,
And garnished with bright cones that swing
  Like jewels, over all prevails!

The Gothic minstrel of the woods,
  He sings the lightest lullaby,
Or, swept by Winter's fitful moods,
  The battle chants, and loud and high
The Pyrrhic numbers rise and roll
To midnight stars, and Earth's great soul
Wails in the solemn interludes
  Of death and woe that never die.

The shriek of ships, the war of waves,
  The fury of the blanching surge,
The desolation of lone graves,
  The shouts that still the onset urge,
The sob of maidens in despair,
All saddest sounds of earth and air,
The harp of Thor o'er peaks and caves,
  Blend in the pæan and the dirge.

So, to the Academic hill
  We bring a scion of the breed
To be, alike in good or ill,
  A shrine, a Pharos, and a creed,
Whose lifting crest and wider reach
Of branch and plume shall ever teach
Our lives to rise, and broaden still
  In wider love and nobler deed.

And, as in sun and cloud and storm,
Caress of winds, and sweets of dew,
He shall arise a kinglier form
As days drift by, and years renew,
Our souls, in calm and tempest tried,
In higher mansions shall reside,
And winter's gale and zephyrs warm
Shall waft us on serene and true.

Returned from life's Olympic fields,
Here shall our cherished bays be hung,
And here shall rest the spears and shields
Which in the battle flashed and rung;
And here, when Dian fills her cup
And all the panting stars are up,
Eros shall wave the bow he wields
While tender hearts to love are strung.

Adieu, O pride of mountain lands!
The long watch of the years is yours,
While we with one long clasp of hands
Pass from our Holy Mother's doors;
Fair is the wreath that Memory brings,
But Hope, on hyacinthine wings,
Will bear us to enchanted strands
Where the resounding ocean pours.

Ah! Life is no Endymion's sleep,
Rose-roofed, in dear Meander's vale;
But, clambering from steep to steep,
Defiant of the Augurs pale,

Like Perseus bold, and Heracles,
We win the asphodels of ease
With labors long, and anguish deep,
And courage never born to fail.

The strongest fortress is the mind,
As wise Antisthenes has said,
And in its diamond towers we find
Repose, when youth and friends are fled.
The heart's red passion-flowers fade
And soft eyes lose their misty shade;
But crowns of amaranthus twined
Are for the world that knows no dead.

The voice that wandering Io heard
From the Caucasian cliff and cloud
Still speaks;—unmarred by hope deferred
The splendid Titan calls aloud,
And, trustful in the coming morn
Of right and truth, his laugh of scorn
Rings when the thunder's wrath is stirred,
And lightnings wreathe his tempest shroud.

High on the future's blue façade
Superb intaglios we engrave,
And dreams in rich mosaic laid
Adorn the tessellated pave.
Wild is the light that streams upon
The lofty pillared propylon,
With many a mystic scene portrayed
On sculptured frieze and architrave.

The banquet of the gods survives,
  Though mixed with marring smoke and flame,
While over us the tempest drives
  With flick'ring fires and clouds of blame;
But, thanks to that Promethean deed,
The gates are all ajar that lead
To amaranthine hopes and lives
  And gorgeous firmaments of fame.

POEM

[Read before the Alumni of Willamette University, Wednesday, June 25, 1873.]

I.

With trailing lance and battle stain
We come from many a path of pain
Where wrestling factions live at war
And ever clash with angry jar:
Home from the front, our brief respite
Must breathe no odor of the fight.

No haughty banners now we bear,
Whose rustling challenge wooes the air;
Hushed is the moan of bitterness—
Unheard the vaunting of success:
With olive crowns of truce we come—
Defeat and victory are one.

Hail, Holy Mother! here we bring
All that is left of wandering.

With wounded pace and broken file,
Returning still to crave thy smile,
Whose radiance like stars we wear
Through all the fortunes of the year.

"What of the night?" you fain would ask,
"What of the long and cruel task?
What of the sword and armor bright
I gave to shield you through the fight?
Thy brothers, sisters, why delay
Their coming feet along the way?"

The night was wilder than we dreamed,
The task was harder than it seemed,
Thy gallant armor served us well
When many a shower of trouble fell!
Our brothers? Sisters? Scattered wide,
Full many struggle with the tide.

Amidst the tumult of the day,
A few fell, weary, by the way,
No touch could rouse them,—we did weep
To leave them lingering still in sleep;
Soothed in the daisied lap of earth,
They know no anger, pain or mirth.

The summer sky with tender grace
Stoops o'er each hallowed resting place,
The fragrant woof of flower and spray
Makes them forgetful of the clay,
And straying Zephyr softly says—
"Wait not for them whom Death delays!"

Ah! Fair Pauline, if worth could charm
The march of Death, or stay his arm,
Thy sad, poetic eye to-day
Would warm us with its friendly ray,
And Addie's mild and winning face
Shine on us from yon vacant place.

Could manhood's bold, aspiring heart
Repel the lurking monster's dart,
The world's tough problems yet might know
The strength of Alva's honest blow.
Nor I had twined this drooping wreath
So illy matched with those beneath.

II.

The Summer, couched upon the hills,
  Dreams on in happy, golden moods;
Her yellow tresses float in rills
  And tangle in the drowsy woods.

Yet somewhere in the azure world
  The winds a dying tryst may keep—
Somewhere the tempest's wings are furled,
  Somewhere the sheathed lightnings sleep.

And knowing this, we always turn
  A kinder face upon the one
Whose incense wastes within its urn,
  Whose fragrant life is swiftly run.

The breath of Immortality
But withers human thought, we love
The Summer smouldering on the lea,
The mournful death-song of the dove.

Torn from the book of Time, the hour
Whirls glimmering through the vault of years,
More lovely that the night must lower,
And painted with the doom it nears.

Who shall repair what fate has torn—
The petals of our morn restore?
Ah! in the womb of years unborn
Our Past shall blossom nevermore!

Along the misty coast, with feet
Forever in the dim advance,
The pilgrim spirit shall not meet
The vanished form of Circumstance:

Yet often when the day declines,
And twilight's purple hush has come,
The school bell's sweet, familiar chimes
Across the gulf are gently swung.

Blown o'er the mountain's smoky crest,
Young voices fill the pleasant void;
The waves of laughter,—rippling zest
Of life and labor are enjoyed.

Not dead, but distant, then they seem,
Those careless merry days of old,
Whose drifting echoes round us teem
And ring like rhythmic bells of gold.

Amid the iron speech of war
Their music is not wholly lost,
Subdued beneath that angry star
Where manhood's sterner fates are tossed.

O! when you paint a heaven for me,
With clustering pleasures brightly strewn,
Restore from faithful memory
Some semblance of the happy zone

Where first the chrysalis of Thought
Rose flashing from its orb of night,
Where Friendship's gordian tie was wrought
Of hearts that mingled free as light.

III.

We are met to be merry, dear friends, and must turn
From stars now extinguished to others that burn.
For the woe of the wise is but passing and brief,
While Faith cannot brook the dominion of Grief.
We must catch the bright sparkles that sprinkle the wave,
Not dive for cool shadows in grotto and cave.
Let us move in those muscular days of the past,
When few were the shadows that cottages cast

On the wild, virgin turf of this wonderful land
That has laughed at the touch of the husbandman's hand:
When Commercial Street (ever so dusty just now),
Would have gladdened the heart of an Irishman's cow;
When the Mayor went fishing, and went all alone,
And business was dull 'til the Mayor came home;
When Willamette, the pet of the valley, was free—
Unvexed in its flowery path to the sea;
And when, nursed in the lap of the green wilderness,
Alma Mater grew strong in its savage caress.

Quite a brilliant affair in that primitive day,
Was the weather-stained structure once over the way;
And sweet were the chimes that were strewn on the gale
On that morn, when the President, seizing a rail
With the grip of a Theseus, pounded the wall
'Til the old University had a close call.
Then he went to the chapel and dusted his chair,
Looked out at the window and then at the stair,
But never the music of jubilant feet
Woke the silence that reigned in the desolate street.
Thus the hours crept on,—the Professors looked wild,
Were persuasive by turns, and had even compiled
More lessons than one, in whose word-woven clouds
Hung the lightnings of vengeance to hurry the crowds,

And the day was consumed, and its ashes in rain
Of luminous purple were sown on the plain.
The Trustees' Convention, laborious and late,
Shook the Chapel that night with a storm of debate.
"That our youth may need College," said one, "yet in truth
Is our College as loudly demandant of youth."
And marching at once o'er the crest of denial,
Suggested to give the young natives a trial.
Ingenuity shone through the latter remark,
And it lit the conclave like a scintillant spark;
And the fiat went forth to the barbarous camp
'Ere the dew on the camas lay sparkling and damp.
And the morrow was wild with a prodigal feast
That swallowed a hundred canines at the least.
Now these natives were rude, and (the least of their sins,
On the subject of vestment were partial to skins)
And the peltry hominis preferred, as by far
The noblest that Nature's patrician can wear;
Most delightful naïveté, but frightfully cool—
So the President thought—for a fashionable school.
A volume of edicts was issued just then,
Which still courts the wonder of scholarly men;
Number One intimates with considerable stress
As to amplification in matters of dress;
In the next the Preceptress just hints at the wish
That young ladies beware of the odor of fish!
Then the serpentine lunch was forbidden till four,
And the war-whoop and scalp-dance to regions indoor;

While the Knights of the Bow were requested to aim
Very low, when intent on Professional game!
Thus the soul of the savage in vapor and beam
Of a second creation, grew bright with the dream
Of mental achievement, and Reason awoke
At the thrill of the Dawning's miraculous stroke;
Or in plebeian language, the Arabic Digger
Plunged " in media Ray " and was learning to figger;
And succeeded so well in felonious subtraction
That professors were driven almost to distraction;
At last, while in quest of the roots of Greek verbs,
They had wandered away in a desert of words—
Away and awild with such radical zeal
That they never returned when a factional wheel
Tossed a radical President into the chair,
And radical officers everywhere.

Thus departed a people of whom it is said,
Not a youth could be found, not extensively *red!*
And we, who fell not from the wearisome pace,
May exult to have had a less col'rable case!
And such are the tints of that varying chance
That have garnished our Mother's heroic advance
Through the scenes of transition as brilliant as quick,
Till at last we behold her " a regular brick!"

Alma Mater! Thy past has been tortured with fears,—
What may we not hope for the inrolling years!
For the arm of the desert is broken, and soon
Our twilight shall flash with the spray of the Noon!

As the pillared Sierras resound with the hoof
Of a steed that stays not for their storm-haunted roof,
O the wilderness dappled with harvests shall teem
With a fatness outvying the emigrant's dream,
Where so long our sad sighs fluttered out but to die
In that dreary expanse all alone with its sky!
And rich with the drift of Pactolian sand
Shall the billows of Industry carpet the land.
In her beauty barbaric and sparkle of gold,
Silver-sandalled and fair as the Sheba of old,
See, the West has gone out and is wed to the East,
While the songs of the oceans are blent at the feast!

From the crystalline tongues of the lakes that repose
With their woven embraces 'mid lingering snows,
From the silvery trail of the rivers that fall
By southern palmetto and fir-guarded wall,
Sweeps the wind-worried pæan of Victory won—
"Lo, the Desert is slain! It is done! It is done!"

O Knowledge that blossomed in Orient bowers,
And in Attica loved thy Athenian towers,
Hither come with thy star-broidered mysteries, and twine
Thy enchantments around this young priestess of thine!
Plant thy lilies of light in the breast of her youth—
Her children that kneel at the altar of Truth!
And we who are facing the tempest of life,
Let us keep within hail as ye flit through the strife;

With a stroke and a parry if foes should assail,
Let us fend our brave Mother through darkness and
gale,
And return when we can to this classical grove
For a new pledge of friendship and promise of love.

ASHES OF ROSES

[Read before the Alumni Association of Willamette University.]

"Music that gentlier on the spirit lies
Than tired eyelids upon tired eyes."
—*The Lotus Eaters*

A sweet hope blushed in the red June roses
On the day that we left our college halls
For the world's wide lists and the stormy closes
Of the old, old strife under time's gray walls;
And the blue sky bent over land and ocean,
When out of the distance a mail-clad hand
And a resonant burst of bugle calls
Urged us away, with a gay devotion,
To the din and dusk of a fateful strand.

It is well our feast and memorial season
Should return with the queenliest month of the year,
Though its bowers are haunted, and tears have a
reason
When the queen of Olympus is queen of the sphere;
The dew-softened flame of her flower is ever

A symbol of memory wedded to hope;—
From a rose-wreathen gateway the day will appear,
And when the shades lengthen on mountain and river
The rose light fades last on the still Western slope.

And so while the days, with an infinite splendor,
Are bursting and burning in passionate bloom,
And the moon, like a censer, all glowing and tender,
Is silently swung through the star-litten gloom,—
The enchantments of youth, and the grace and the glory
Of our crowning for battle return with the time
When ambrosial garlands of fancy perfume
The laboring present, the vision and story
That make the past sacred, the future sublime.

Wherever it reached us, in pleasure or duty,
The glamour of conquest or silence of woe,—
The recall of our Mother, in accents of beauty,
Awoke our allegiance in love's overflow:—
The gates of remembrance swung open before us,
And the pathway whose foot-prints are guarded so well—
While the shining array of the dear long ago
Swept down to the march, and the marvellous chorus
That was rung from the bronze of the old chapel bell.

Oh, sweet and rare,
From stair to stair,
Like golden brooklets in the air,
Falling and filling;—

Or bird that floats
With raining notes
Where an April rainbow glows and gloats
The saintly bell made music thrilling.
Sweet as dreams
Of fireside gleams
In lowly lands, by weary streams,
Pleasures recalling;—
Or voice serene
O'er the templed sheen
Of the glorious city of Saladin
When the Moslem call to prayer is falling.

And what forms are those that so silently cluster
And beckon and whisper in stairway and hall?
Faces of angels, but over their lustre
Shadows unspeakably sorrowful fall.
Christ! is it thus that the ghosts of our playtime
Return to behold us with pitiful eyes—
To review the disasters that compass us all—
To be told of our deeds of the dark and the daytime
And the measureless lapse from the olden emprise?
The immortal Three Hundred on fame's purple
morning
Foreseeing the doom of that garlanded day,
Anointed their locks, and with graceful adorning
Went down to the Persian in festal array;—
But if we, in the flush of our blooming ambition,
Could behold the misfortunes that darken our air,
And the shadow of self in defeat and decay,

How the proud head would bow to the dark apparition
And the young heart would burst with an awful despair!

Oh, blessed bell,
Thy murmurs swell
Like the sound of seas that haunt the shell
Of ocean ever;
By thee is borne
To hearts forlorn
The remembered music of the morn
Though youth and hope are lost forever.

And thus the past
Is ours at last—
On the silvery billows crowding fast
Scenes that are cherished;—
The cable slips,
And our shallop dips
On the sea where a thousand crystal ships
Return with the joys that long have perished.

I have read in some story of Orient travel
Of a mystical symbol that often recurs
In those tombs of the Nile where the learned unravel
The religion of Magian worshippers;
It is that of the outward and physical mortal
Adoring the type of the indwelling soul,
And preserved in that painting that time never blurs,

On the funeral walls, or the temple's rich portal,
Glowing and bright as the centuries roll.

And the thought is sublime, with a deep revelation
Older than prophecy's feverish dream—
And unconsciously still we concede an oblation
Is due the eternal, ethereal beam
That is lodged in our bosoms, the guest of a season,
A god in mortality's tear-misted veil—
And a god that can weep over life's bitter theme
And this burden of clay whose unspeakable treason
Attaints the green earth with the blight of its trail.

In the faith of old Egypt we come to our college,
Seeking the souls of our worshipful youth,
With the gifts of our labors and gleanings of knowledge,
Or with hands that are empty and pleading for truth;
And we know all along when our stern Alma Mater
Looked over the fields from the victory gate,
It was then that they clustered, in ardor and truth,
Like the angels of dawn o'er some sulphurous crater,
Our guardian in many a dubious strait.

For they often come down in the smoke of our striving,
Like the Olympian gods to the struggle of Troy;—
In the swirl of our lives, where the tempests are driving,
How often the man is upheld by the boy!

And we surely do well to remember them truly,
And keep the ideal of life that they drew,
For the cup of young Innocence, brimming with joy,
Like the gift of the queen to her monarch of Thule,
Will keep our hearts leal the long journey through.

A song, a shout,
A lawless rout,
Gone wild with the joy of school let out,
Merriest noises;—
A comrade's pledge,
A jest's bright edge,
As gay as the thrill of a lark in the hedge.
Oh bell of magic, are thy voices!

A gentle prayer
In the morning air,
When the girls were so placidly fresh and fair,
Followed by singing;—
A friendly word,
In the twilight heard,
When the youthful soul was so darkly stirred,
Mix with the bell's celestial ringing.

Like the crystalline circles a pebble has shaken
From the violet dream of some glimmering lake,
A life is a cycle of lustres that waken,
And pass from the centre the motion they take;
While the flesh is the motor—the impulse that's given—

The dull weight that startles the first gleaming band,
Whence a wavering myriad of bright circles break
In the luminous ether, from heaven to heaven,
Till they murmur at last on Elysium's strand.

And the youth is the loveliest circle that dances
In the billowy cycles of storm-broken years,—
In its spirit of light and its mirroring trances
The pageant of all the blue heaven appears;
And its radiant thoughts may be cruelly shivered
In the swift tribulations that come to us all,
But its beauty remains through all tempests and tears,
And the delicate pictures that darkened and quivered
Return when the calms of eternity fall.

A low word now,
A whispered vow,
When the moonlight kissing a maiden's brow
To speech embolden;—
For the time could wait
At a trysting gate
'Til the flowers had bashfully sighed "so late;"
When speech was silver and silence golden.

When winter comes
The wild bird roams
Away from our sad and sunless homes
False in her praises:
For birds and bees

Love blooming trees,
But the bell is a snare to the loves of these,
And will ring us down to the dreams of the daisies.

The ring and the lamp of the Arabic legend
To those who possessed them, their spell ne'er denied,
But the slave never came from his mystical region
Till the master's warm hand the caress had applied.
It is thus that the gifts of the gods should be treasured,
It is thus that our labors have blossom and fruit,
And though hands may be weary and souls may be tried
It is thus that success is accomplished and measured
When the priests are astray and the oracles mute.

Like the knights of King Arthur's traditional table,
The faithful in love and the valiant in war,
Here is our Camelot, massive and stable,
A temple of chivalry shining afar:
It is here the shields, which are blank when we take them,
Are hung when each yearly reunion returns;—
Shields with Sir Launcelot's blazon and scar—
Or bare as Sir Modred's—for thus as we make them,
The laurels each wears are the laurels he earns.

No life can be utterly hopeless and dreary,
If the friendships, the jewels of youth, but remain,
For we builded as high as the eagle's wild eyrie,

In distrust of the earth and its reek and its stain:
In the night and the storm, when the billows are wailing,
We must chain all our faith to the anchor of gold;
It was forged in the light of Affection's bright reign,
And the drift of the heart, when belief is all failing,
Sadly may strain but not loosen its hold.

Over the musical fountain of laughter
Weepeth the willow of ruth and regret,
And the shades of the past and the trackless hereafter
Will come when the banquet of pleasure is set;
But our loves are kept green and our spirits are nourished
By the bountiful mists and the murmuring rain,
For the day never failed to come back to us yet,
And the flowers that fell in the fields where they flourished
In the vales of the future will blossom again.

So ring thy knell,
O, wizard bell,
Like a lover's last and long farewell,
Fondly delaying,
As sweet and slow
As rivers flow
By the cities that perished long ago,
When a sunset light is softly playing.

The knell is tolled;
Its echoes rolled
Over the mountains of misted gold;—
Sadly we linger;—
The feast is o'er,
And at the door
The Fate that forever walks before,
Has lifted a silent and warning finger.

SEQUOIA SEMPERVIRENS

The occasion of planting the class tree at the State University—June 18, 1887.

Once in the mystic days of old
By Kephisos the gods were met,
A shining circle, throne by throne,
The rulers of Olympus shone,
While robes of purple, crowns of gold
Than sky or sun seemed brighter yet.

'Twas there, contending each for fame,
Poseidon and Athena stood
And, triumphing, the battle queen
Called from the earth the olive green
And gave "the violet crowned" the name
Revered from Hellespont to Hood.

With gentle rites we, too, to-day,
Who fain would be remembered here,
Set in this sacred soil a tree

Our green memorial to be
When, drifting outward, far away
Our parted ships shall disappear.

It came from Californian hills,
The purple highlands of romance
Whose deep resounding forests caught
The footsteps of the Argonaut,
When with a fortitude that thrills
He led the Western world's advance.

The epic of the golden age
Among the mighty redwoods rang;
Beneath their shadows, dim at noon,
The " rocker," and the " tom " were hewn,
And history turned another page
With battle shout and armor clang.

No wise Medea came to greet
The gallant Jasons of that time;
Alike to them was war or peace
Who came to seek the golden fleece,
And in the battle toil and heat
Their sordid lust became sublime.

The smoke of scattered campfires rose
Above the royal redwoods then
But not as incense—Forty-nine
Knew neither god nor priest nor shrine,
But with Titanic ringing blows
Preached a stern creed in gulch and glen.

They builded better than they knew
While winds breathed music through the trees,
For long before their toil was done
The land they robbed their hearts had won,
And then in their allegiance true
They heard no more the calling seas.

Now bourgeoning with all our hopes
Around this tree our thoughts will twine
But sometime, maybe in defeat,
Returning with world-weary feet
Along these dear familiar slopes
'Twill be to us a joy divine.

Here Memory with pensive brow
Will tell her golden rosary—
And all we have to hope or fear
Seem nothing when as pilgrims here
The bright world, as we see it now,
Shall fling its portals wide and free.

Beneath the sapphire arch of June
We'll meet the spirits of the past;
The scent of roses in the air
Will wake a longing, half despair
Like that which Hermes' sea-shell tune
Upon the bright-haired Argive cast.

This scion of the forest dark
That echoed in heroic days

Shall be our pharos and our fane
As sailing o'er the misty main
With shattered sail and groaning barque
We need some strength our hearts to raise.

To us it must forever stand
A shrine and sacred symbol too,
And when our gold-browed stars are lost
Our destinies all tempest-tossed,
It will recall that rugged band
Who in their conflict nobler grew.

The bluff, broad-shouldered knights are gone,
Their white tents furled, their trails effaced,
And yet their better conquests thrill
Our hearts with emulation still,
And lead us like Crusaders on
To deeds by every virtue graced.

THE FEAST OF THE FLOWER MOON

The circle of days is clasped and completed,
  And the flowers bring gold to the bridal of Faith,
For the drama of life is restored and repeated,
  In the bannerless calm of the forest of death,
When the blue-bird and violet come back together,
Blown by the South wind, blue blossom and feather,
  With the music and fragrance of Spring's first
    breath.

The dead year has joined the dim dead without number
And the chalice of being brims over anew,
The crape of old sorrows can never encumber
The heraldic ensigns of the sunlight and dew
As the new year arises, resplendent and regal,
Wearing no trace of the task and the vigil,
While the roses drink crimson, forgetful of rue.

The flower will fade when its odor is wasted,
And the heart must grow cold when its passions fulfil;
But the cup of the gods the pale lips have once tasted
Is enwreathed for the banquet awaiting them still;
The daisies await in the vernal adorning,
And the dead that sleep under, some beautiful morning
Will greet the red sun on his orient hill.

In the robes of her queenhood the young moon of flowers
Goes up to her temple of azure and pearl,
While the incense of beauty awakens the hours
That salute her and pass in a glimmering swirl,
Braiding light gems in the garlands of pleasure
And weaving swift songs in the mystical measure
The seas love to chant as they sparkle and curl.

'Tis a time we have chosen, the time of all others,
For the feast and oblation of Tammany's day,

And we bind the gold chain of the totemic brothers
With the chaplets that garnish the altar of May—
In the beauty and mystery, dear and yet dying,
When the waters sing low and the breezes are sighing
The refrain of a race that has faded away.

In the darkness of days when the hatchet was lifted,
And the crested Ohio went moaningly by,
From a star that shone out when the cloud-rack was rifted,
Our illustrious emblems were dropt from the sky,—
Freedom, enriched with the blood of the dearest,
Friendship, forever serenest and clearest,
And the gem in whose lustre all sorrows must die.

And the brow of the soldier was suddenly lighted
As his strong hand was clasped on the glittering prize,
While the anguish of battle was strangely requited
And dissolved like a cloud in the holy emprise;
For war bent his plume to the circle fraternal
Surrounding the gift of the spirit supernal—
The reward of the true and delight of the wise.

On the star-tinted fields of the blue empyrean
There are circles in circles that blazon the night;
As for us in the vales of the meek Galilean,
The historical orders, from vases of light,
Scatter the perfume and treasure of heaven—

Each in the orbit the Spirit has given,
And serene as the stars in the tempests' despite.

In the virtues we keep and the good that we scatter
The memorial traces of glory remain,
For the sachems sleep well in the world's weary clatter
While a votary seeks the sylvestrian fane;
A strange race, and wise in each presage and omen—
As grand as the Greek and as proud as the Roman,
And so priestly and calm in all pleasure and pain.

O, the wild life they led, the imperial vagrance,
With its dalliance of love and its banquet of war,
Where the sycamores rustled and pines wafted fragrance,
And their speech was aglow with the rose and the star!
But the grasses grow green, and the green grasses wither,
While the winds ask the waves, and the waves answer "Whither?"
For they wander no more by the rivers afar.

After life's changing story, the brave and big-hearted
Are serenely encamped in some radiant vale,
And they lightly resume the bright threads that were parted,
And the echoes of song that enliven the tale;

While we haunt the old forests with dreamy white faces
For the classic medallions and lost arts and graces
Of the race that has silently passed from the pale.

In the tricksy parade of our conquests of learning,
In the tinsel of courts and the clamor of marts,
There is nothing at last but a desolate yearning,
And a skeleton stalks in our gossamer arts,
For we curse as we cringe to a duty golden,
Curse with hot lips, as our tortures embolden,
Till the beauty of freedom has conquered our hearts.

On the trails of the Red Men, though fading, forsaken,
It is left us to glean the wild flowers of truth,
And rekindle the campfire, and gently awaken
The virtues forever refulgent in youth,
Till the beautiful Triad, arisen and shining,
Illumine the ways of our toiling and pining
With its brilliant twin stars in a crescent of truth.

In the forests embattled, and mountains of splendor,
Where the Siskiyous call to the stormy Cascades,
Surely Freedom shall find a strong arm to defend her;
And the temples of friendship arise in the glades—
May the mantle of charity never be narrow
In the shadow of want or the chamber of sorrow,
While the May moon returns with our Gems in her braids.

Poems of Sentiment

AT PARTING

A Commencement Song

Beside the mystic river
  At holy evenfall,
Where golden lilies quiver,
  And reedy murmurs call,
We pause, dear hearts, at starting,
  Each leaning on his oar,
And never know till parting,
  How beautiful the shore!

CHORUS

  Touch hands with love,
  Touch lips with tears,
  The golden lilies chime,
  And call us to the river,
  And down the tide of Time.

The brow of Alma Mater
  Ne'er shone with such a light;
And O! we know that later
  When tempests come, and night,
That light, forever shining
  Along Life's troubled main,

Will cheer us, though repining,
In darkness and in pain.

(CHORUS)

The stars march on; the gleaming
Of every diamond crest,
And white plumes dimly streaming
Above the world's unrest,
Tell us the martial story
That rules the realms of space,
The combat and the glory
Heroic lives may face.

The last word must be spoken,
The last song must be sung,
Yet, O! we give no token
Of how our hearts are wrung,
As here beside the river,
We lean and look and sigh,
And on our faint lips quiver
The long, long words, *Good-bye!*

(CHORUS)

ONLY A FEATHER

There is never a rose in the green garden blows
  In the time of the dreamiest weather,
That enkindles my heart till in rapture it glows
  As the flame of this dear little feather.
It is crimson, you see, and so many there be
  That may rival its aniline lustre,
It is strange that it weaves such a spell upon me,
  As the redolent memories cluster.

The philosophers read any secret at need,
  And restore a dead field from a flower,
Or a forest with banners from one withered seed,
  That has slept in a fossilized bower;
And they'd tell me to-day, from this tremulous spray,
  This endeared and adorable feather,
Of a Romanized warbler that wore it one day
  When the sun-birds were singing together.

And I'd nod, and I'd smile, but I'd know all the while
  They were lost in a tangle of fable;
There was never a bird in a palm-crested isle
  That the orient fairies called Mabel;
And there's no bird that roves in the pomegranate
      groves,
  Or savannas of villas suburban,
That displays such a plume, as it gracefully moves
  In a dainty Parisian turban.

And from tip unto tip, with a pause at her lip,
It is useless to tell you the measure
Of the sweet-throated thrush that allured me to sip
The delight of the chalice of pleasure;
For the years, as they flow, have a cadence of woe
That my heart was bowed down to discover,
Since she moulted this plume, many summers ago,
As she leaned on the breast of her lover.

Oh, the myrtle-sweet days, how they throng to my gaze
In a crimsoning vista of roses,
While the light of romance reverentially plays
O'er the scene that my fancy discloses;
For my sweetheart is there on the glimmering square,
Where the school-girls at evening are trooping,
And her wavering plume, like a flame in the air,
Is gracefully swaying and drooping.

Ah well, it is right that I sorrow to-night,
And I kneel to the fate that is given,
For the joy of that time, like Promethean light,
Was purloined from the treasure of heaven:
It is well that I moan for the day that is gone,
For my life is astray altogether,
While the dreams of my summer like swallows have flown,
And left this memorial feather.

ADIEU

Adieu! No word can now be said
To wake a love forever dead;
Kissed for the last time, let it sleep
Where hopes repine and memories weep.

Swept by the lethal wave of doom
Its lips shall never blush with bloom,
Or wreathe again with any smile
They wore in happy days erewhile.

Its rare red roses whirl away,
A drift of ashes, cold and gray,
And hollow whispers now prolong
Remembrance of sweet speech and song.

The birds, blown south by wintry gales,
Return again to vernal vales,
And from their slumber in the mould
Arise the flowers, blue and gold;

Out of the sea, on wings of pearl,
The scattered streams in flight unfurl
To braid the mountain's helm of white
And brim the fountains of delight;

But dear Affection, darkly slain,
Shall live alone in throbs of pain,

And no swift angel's touch of light
Weave threads of dawning in its night.

For me no gleaming arch of hope
Stoops o'er the future's misty slope;
Struck by thy hand my visions die,
My castled dreams in ruin lie.

I will not weakly droop and wail
Above my treasures, crushed and pale,
Nor linger idly at the shrine
That answers not one prayer of mine.

But on the altar ashes lay
This drooping wreath, and go my way
Down sunset slopes and to the sea
That rolls to dim eternity.

With men below and gods above
There's naught so sweet in life as love,
E'en heaven is all a lonesome shore
To them whose dream of love is o'er.

With all our faith we hardly trust
That God will keep the rose's dust
Where faithlessness with blighting breath
Has struck its petals pale with death.

Yet, haply, earth's long trail of shade
Another star shall not invade,

But on that golden beach shall wait
The angel of a better fate.

FOREVER

The temples of youth are decaying
In Beulah, the beautiful vale,
While life has been wearily straying
Away from its radiant pale
To the waters of Marah, all sobbing
The sorrow of desolate years,
The sorrow and tremulous throbbing
Of hopes that have darkened to fears.
"Forever, forever, forever!"
Is the song of a dolorous river—
The wail of the river of tears.

In Beulah a ringleted river,
That danced in a garland of pearl,
First sang the refrain of *Forever*,
With many a wimple and swirl;
And the flag-flowers bent in the rushes
For a touch of the fanciful stream,
As the roses in redolent blushes
Were aflame with the magical dream.
"Forever, forever, forever!"
Was the song of the ringleted river—
The refrain of a beautiful theme.

And Love, with red lips, in the pauses
Of passion took up the refrain,

When the birds, in ecstatical clauses
  Of silence, to listen were fain;
But the asp, in a silvery quiver
  Of mystery, whispered the breeze,
That a rainbow of crimson would ever
  Rekindle the blossom of Ease.
    "Forever, forever, forever!"
      Was the song of the jubilant river
      In the odorous haunts of the bees.

Where mountains in desolate places
  Are crouching bare-kneed in the sand,
Hoary sphinxes, with mystical faces,
  Wide gazing in revery grand;
The garlands I twine by the river
  Are fillets of flame on my brow,
And the crystalline chime of *Forever*
  Is the dirge of Elysium now.
    "Forever, forever, forever!"
      Was the chant of the musical river,
      That sang me a treacherous vow.

The stars, on their cold eminences,
  May weave immortelles of the light,
But my soul, in this vapor of senses,
  Is crowned with the sorrow of night;
And the oceans may chant as they follow
  The glimmering shield of the moon,
But their anthem is weary and hollow—

A gloomy unsyllabled rune.
"Forever, forever, forever!"
Is a lonesome refrain, if it sever
A soul from the loves of its June.

There's an odor of death in the flowers
That droop in this chaplet of mine,—
Believe me, in sunnier hours
They breathed an aroma divine!
And so I shall wear them forever,
Unlovely endearments of death,
As I turn with sick lips and a shiver
From love's indestructible wraith.
"Forever, forever, forever!"
O sing to me, shadowy river,
And heal the old sorrows of faith!

LURLINA

Beneath a wintry moon, love,
The tented hills repose,
But all my soul is June, love,
And all my heart a rose.
Another moon is rising,
Full-bosomed, near, and warm—
A sweet old dream surprising
Remembrance with its charm.

The town lies twinkling yonder,
Another world than ours—

We have no thoughts to squander
On wooden walls and towers;
Under the locust, walking,
We breathe an air divine—
The stars and flowers are talking,
But we all speech resign.

The season wreathed with beauty,
The throbbing summer night,
Make loving thee a duty,
Adoring thee, delight.
The birds above us nestle,
Asleep with folded wing—
We hear their soft plumes rustle;
They almost wake and sing!

. . . . . .

We did not drain the chalice,
But quaffed its rich bouquet—
Maybe 'twas grace, not malice,
That snatched the cup away.
You went your way serenely,
And I went mine with blame;
Your brow was calm and queenly
And mine was red with flame.

Lurlina, Heaven flies not
From souls it once hath blessed;
First love may fade, but dies not,
Though wounded and distressed;
The star, long since departed,
Still haunts our midnight skies,

Just as the broken-hearted
  Will keep some golden lies.

Though after days deride us
  With Hymen's broken rings,
We know that once beside us
  An angel furled his wings;
And angels come so rarely
  Along life's troubled way,
We may remember fairly
  The moment, as the day.

We leave our dead, with yearning,
  Where daisies drink the dew,
And live our lives in learning
  That dreams alone are true;
For dreams, in wild expansions
  Of moonlit locust trees,
Have built such perfect mansions,
  And wrought such rosaries!

Adieu! Like ships in ocean
  That nevermore may meet,
We pass, in life's free motion,
  To victory or defeat;
Your bark, yet eastward sailing,
  Will seek the pearl of day,
But mine, with songs of wailing,
  Drift down in purple spray.

SINCE IT MUST BE SO

They know a tender parting phrase
In dreamy Kaladeen,
Where summer's tressy tangled rays
Embroider gold and green;
For the lotus blooms, the bulbul sings
While they kiss the cup of woe,
And sigh, as the lifted anchor swings,
"And since it must be so."

Be that our pledge at parting, too,
With hearts of orient calm;
We cannot change the things we rue
Beneath the pine or palm.
When the wind is fair, the sail unfurled,
God speed the ships that go—
And waft the echo round the world—
"And since it must be so."

The leaves that hid the robin's nest
Drop softly, one by one,
Then birdie roams, like all the rest,
When shadow follows sun;
While the beaded brooklets flash and fall
By many a mead they know,
They answer ocean's solemn call
"And since it must be so."

The floral arches of our sky
  Are fading all too soon,
And sombre shades of twilight lie
  Upon the brow of noon;
Though Youth may braid his shining hair,
  And sing to the years that flow,
He will sigh at last with a sweet despair—
  "And since it must be so."

Ah, sweetheart, we must go our ways,—
  Divided lives and dooms,
For the marching spirit still displays
  A crest of shining plumes:—
Red roses and red lips are dust,
  And our songs are sad below
Till our souls ascend to that tearless trust:
  "And since it must be so."

Then lightly pitch the roving tent
  Of life's capricious day,
Where sun and shadow, blown and blent,
  Are chasing o'er the way;
For the golden lotus lifts and swings
  Its fragrance to and fro,
And the soul to itself nepenthe brings—
  "And since it must be so."

A MAIDEN'S SONG

In a chamber rich with shaded color
A maiden loosed her lustrous hair,—
Like a languid moon in a mesh of sunlight,
Her beauty throbbed in the tressy snare.
Oh! she was fair as a red-lipped lily,—
A rosy marble of moulded song,
And round her lips fond words were humming
Like sweet, faint bees that feast too long:—

"Love will surely come to-morrow,—
Even now his glowing feet
Dash the dappled shore of darkness
Into blushes warm and sweet,
And his ruby waving arrow,
Points to me and to to-morrow!"

Awhile she stood in the rippled splendor
Of amber tresses all unbound,
And the irised clouds of castled dreamland
Went sailing o'er her soul profound;
But the dear eyes drooped with sudden languor,
And over her curving lips a shade
Of far, faint trouble fell and flitted,
As she gathered her hair in a careless braid.

"Love will surely come to-morrow,—
But if Love inconstant be,

Death had better wear my favor,
As a faithful knight to me;—
For, if Love assail with sorrow,
Death should be my guest to-morrow."

She sleeps! and her breasts, like fresh camellias
White-clustered round twin buds of rose,
Allure an amorous swarm of starbeams
To feed upon her sweet repose;
And the lashes, brown as twilight shadows,
Droop softly o'er the sapphire eyes,
And around her lips the bashful dimple
Of love's young dreams entranced lies.

"Love will surely come to-morrow!
All the roses at the gate
Lean their dewy lips together
As they whisper, 'Dream and wait;
Many maids a wreath will borrow—
Love will surely come to-morrow.'"

Then the moon uprose, her slender sickle
From steep to steep was handed on,
And again the harvest gold of midnight
In sheafy splendor showered down.
An angel from the fretted casement
Of farthest star, on wings of pearl
Kept tryst with her; upon her bosom
A moment lay a fragrant curl.

"Love will surely come to-morrow;
Whom the angels kiss at night;
'Neath the vermeil arch of morning
Ever find their soul's delight;—
Nevermore a doubt will harrow,—
Love will come to them to-morrow."

Then the morning broke—its beryl billow
Fringed with scarlet foam outspread,
As the day had burst its dewy calyx,
And flamed in blossom overhead;
But the maiden, pale as some wan flower
In whose pure chalice love had burned
Its magic perfumes, lay unlitten,—
Heart and hope to ashes turned!

"Death will often claim the morrow,
We have wreathen with desire;
Often Hope but decks the altar
Where his flames at last expire;
Yet, if Love assail with sorrow,
Death were truer king to-morrow."

Poems of Patriotism

"LIGHTS OUT"

Lo, the bugle call has sounded,
And the torch of life is out—
In the darkened tent of slumber,
Come no dreams of siege or rout,

Where Missouri's tawny waters
By the inland city flow
To the isles that gem the tropic
Purple sea of Mexico.

On the golden shield of honor,
In his silent bivouac,
Lightly rests he, but no trumpet
Now shall call the hero back.

And the sentry stars above him,
On the wintry walls of night,
Pass the countersign of "Sherman"
To the angel hosts of light.

And the years shall bear the challenge
Of "Tecumseh's" martial fame,
Borne 'mid thunder peals of conflict
On through storms of smoke and flame.

Let the nation's glowing banner
Be the garland of his tomb,
As its chosen sacred symbols
In eternal lustre bloom;

And its stars shall be as lilies,
Mystic violets the blue—
And its red the rose of battle
In the wreath to merit due.

But the winds shall chant the pæans
Of the conquests of the free,
And his loyal ghostly army
Still go marching to the sea.

THE SONG OF THE SWORD

The Spring of '98

There's a thrill in my conscious blade of steel,
Like the thrill in the lance of light
When it wakes the world, too long enfurled
In the mocking dream of night;
Has a war note struck—and must I leap forth
With the sword-knot's blush of pride,
And plead for my wedded South and North
And a righteous claim denied?

From its dewy cover bursts the rose
In a blushful morn of June,
But the lily's breath has a taint of death
Where the wan lakes lie a-swoon;

For the rose breathes love and love brings war
But the lily sighs for peace,
As the world moves on with scath and scar
Till the bugle sounds surcease.

When the winds arise, the still sea stirs
And tosses a stormy main,
As the gold-mailed stars salute red Mars
From the crest of their purpled plain;
They know it is but the pulse of life
Arousing a deadly calm—
That the tempest with freshening dews is rife
From the shores of bloom and balm.

Though peace is sweet, shall we clasp her close
Till her sleep is a fevered dream,
And never awake for a great truth's sake
Though the baleful death-lights gleam?
Ah no! The drift of her golden hair
Gorgonian wreaths become
When the world forgets the trumpet's blare,
And the cannon's lips are dumb.

There is life in death, and death in life,
In the changeful web and woof
Of the mighty loom in whose light and gloom
Is our fibre put to proof:
And the palms of peace and the plumes of war
In the march of time have place,
As advancement rolls her royal car
To the shining heights of grace.

As the red rose bursts its calyx green
When the birds its blooming sing,
Ere the canker's mould has marred its fold
And its dream of dawn takes wing,
From encircling Peace does the crimson flower
Of a great truth burst and glow
When the cannons boom the fateful hour,
And the stormy trumpets blow.

As the dawn's alert and thrilling gleams,
The slumbering hills apprise
That the young morn waits at the eastern gates
And their crests in pride must rise,
So I, like a radiant messenger
Of light, from the sheath must leap,
And when Freedom calls must answer her
That her legions do not sleep.

THE ROUNDED AGE

A Centennial Poem

Unfurl the flag! let the winds caress
And lift it in rippling loveliness
Over all the wild west-world we claim,
By cross and sword and in Freedom's name,
From the peaks that gleam o'er Alaskan gloom
To the isles of palm and the shores of bloom;
From the sacred rock where the seed was sown
To the sunset capes where the flower has blown,

O, flag of the Union, toss and wave!
Millions thy freemen—but ne'er a slave!

Unfurl the flag! let it curl and kiss
The zephyr that faints in the summer's bliss:
It was born in storm, and its glory sprung
Where the bolts of the battle shrieked and sung:
Through smoke and cloud it has won the right
To float and flaunt when the days are bright.
We know what souls in its white stars shine,
And the blood on its crimson spilled like wine;
We know the strife and the woes and fears
That hedged it round for a hundred years!
Unfurl the flag! we have followed far
That mystical token of stripe and star,
And borne upon many a field of dread
Its streaming splendor of white and red;
But now from the height of the struggling years
It bursts like the dawn on a night of tears,
And we gather beneath it, with radiant brows,
As under the beautiful arch that bows
In the shimmering vapors, after the rain
Has smitten the flowers and fields of grain.

I.

The days are dim, the world is old
And bleak with human dust and mould,
In plume and mail the bold knights ride
To fray and tourney—scarf and sword,
Love's sweet intrigue, the warrior's pride
Rule king and courtier, liege and lord;

For war and love and lust of gold
And gropings for the things untold
Put many a lance in rest, and stain
The weary earth with gory slain.
Kings come and go in tragic state,
And crowns with sparkling jewels set
In battle débris lie, and yet
The round world wheels, and Time and Fate
Touch hands and whisper, "God can wait!"
And still the despot's iron sway
Strikes truth and genius in the dust,
True hearts repine, great spirits rust
While high aspirings melt away.
From superstition's sable wing
All midnight shadows fall and fling
A pall of terror o'er the land;
While Christ's dear cross, in struggle long,
Rocks to and fro above the throng,
Borne on by many a bloody hand!
In old, old ways the ships sail on
From mart to mart and shore to shore,
And every voyage, o'er and o'er
The sea-paths traced in ages gone;
And, wide and wild, Atlantic lies,
Untracked, unknown beneath the skies
That hover far upon his breast,
And still his thundering surge is piled
Along the Old World's trodden strand;
But never yet, by breezes bland
Or any hope of gain beguiled,
Has ship essayed the curtained west.

II.

A sail! a sail! three ships in line
Steer blithely o'er the ocean's rim;
The blue seas foam beneath each keel,
Their black prows dash the beaded brine—
They bear the flag of proud Castile,
The sailors chant a Romish hymn!
Down the unknown and vasty world
Of rolling waters rides the fleet.
The white mists round the sky are furled,
And fair winds fill the snowy sheet.
Lead on, Maria, reel and toss
Into the waste of wave and sky,
An unseen hand leads thee across;
Thy path is marked by God's own eye!
Be true, O stately Genoese!
Keep heart and hope whate'er befall—
A lofty fate has thee in thrall,
Fear not the strange storm-beaten seas!
The gems, the gold that garnished well
The queenly form of Isabel,
Were torn from snowy arm and breast
To speed thee in the mystic West.

III.

'Tis done. Three ships at anchor ride
Before an isle of sun and song,
While rude barbarians dumbly throng
The rich and flow'ry forest side,
And still with child-like wonder gaze

Upon a knight in courtly dress,
Whose bearded lips the new earth press;
And start again with quaint amaze
To see him draw his sword amain
And claim San Salvador for Spain.

IV.

I look again. Long years have flown —
A single bark, with sullied sail
And many a mark of wave and gale,
Tacks in upon a pallid shore—
All silent save the sad sea moan.
A boat is launched, with lab'ring oar
The voyagers, stern-browed and pale,
Attain the strand and kneel for prayer:
A wintry chill is in the air,
And all the wan skies overhead,
By films of frosty cloud o'erspread,
Give neither hue of hope, nor sign
Of living God or grace benign,
And yet these men of faith and song,
Who flee from priestly rule and wrong,
Kiss the cold rock on which they kneel
And Plymouth's shrouded empire claim
For One who holds a higher name
Than Aragon or proud Castile,
And lo! the bleak woods, white and grim,
Re-echo their thanksgiving hymn,
And stretch their hands in crystal mail
As if to bid the Pilgrims hail.

V.

Another age. Long troublous years
Have rolled into the silent realm;
The hand that held the Mayflower's helm
Has long been dust, and scarce appears
'Mid Hayti's tangled vine and bloom
The great Genoan's lowly tomb;
And fields expand and cities shine
Along the new world's border line.
What scene is this? A straggling town
In green New England—while the morn
Chases the lingering shadows down,
And loops her veil of silver gray
Across the gateway of the day,
With restless doubts and fears forlorn
Full half a hundred burghers meet
Upon the dim and silent street;
While some have guns and stand and load,
With furtive glances down the road.
But hark! I hear the measured tread
Of martial ranks; Pitcairn ahead,—
And like a sudden burst of flame
The scarlet coats emerge in sight
Their muskets flickering in the light,
And halt before that band of fame.
"Disperse, ye rebels!" Pitcairn cries;
But not a single townsman flies;
When then a movement and a flash,
And quick the levelled muskets crash,—
While here and there a patriot falls

Under the thunder shower of balls.
But Freedom's battle has begun
With that first blood at Lexington!

VI.

The closing scene. In Congress Hall
The fearless chiefs are gathered all,
This day a hundred years ago;
And bold John Hancock, rising up,
Like one who waves a wassail cup,
Lifts o'er his head, where all can see,
The ringing ritual of the free,—
And with his pen, just freshly dipt,
Points to his own gigantic script—
Which e'en our lisping children know—
"The King can read that name," he said,
"And set his price upon my head!"
Honor to him, and let his name
Shine fairly still in deathless fame!
Honor to him, and God bless all
Who sat that day in Congress Hall,
And pledged their names and honor bright
To stand for Freedom and the right!
How well that sacred vow was kept,
How well they battled side by side
Through the long years when conflict swept
The Colonies with ruin wide—
The coronal of clustered stars
And rippling flame of bannered bars
Proclaim in every wind to-day

From rugged Maine to Mexic Bay!
And prouder than Achilles' fame,
Or any god's that Homer sung,
Is that serene, refulgent name
Whose glory all the world has rung—
Till every virtue 'neath the sun
Is named in naming Washington.
And O, if from the silent bourne
The pilgrim's spirit e'er return
To look upon the things of earth,
May we not think that he, the first
In war and peace, leads forth again
His host on many a storied plain
Where Freedom's infancy was nursed;
And that they march, and charge and wheel,
With soundless shot and viewless steel,
Along the fields their valor won?
To-day, when crimson battle dew
Is sprinkled o'er the soil anew,
May we not think the summer air
Is bright with legions hovering there
To view the deeds that we have done,—
And that 'tis not the wind that lifts,
In starry waves and rosy drifts
The banners blushing o'er the land,
But the soft sweep of spirit wings—
The claspings and the mutterings
Of Washington's immortal band?

VII.

The lights are dim and men are blind,
And toil and toil with doubtful mind,
Though all the tangled ways of Time
Are redolent of truth sublime,
Of her long march o'er broken fanes
And purple reek of battle stains,
With golden tresses blown behind,
We know no more, but blessed are they
On whom God puts his hand to say,
"The hour is ripe, lead ye the way!"
Through misty æons, dim and vast,
In night and storm, and wrath and pain,
Of moaning seas and fiery strain,
The fruitful earth came forth at last;
And so this broad and equal state,
To human freedom dedicate,
Is but the flower of ages long,
Upspringing from a soil of wrong;
What woes shall come, what conflicts dark
Shall yet surround the sacred ark,
He only knows who set the stars
Above the stormy shock of wars;
Yet blest are we, whose kindling eyes
Have seen this mighty day arise,
And greet through grateful smiles and tears
The banner of a hundred years!
When once again the planets wheel
Their courses through an equal age,
We too shall sleep, with all the leal

Whose names adorn our brightest page;
And sweet the thoughts that other men
Will bear the same dear colors then—
That in these skies of violet
The stars of Union shall not set!

Hail and farewell, O flag of light—
Receive our greeting and good-night!
Mortality's unwelcome shade
Across our fading lips is laid,—
We pass to rest, but o'er our sleep
Thy deathless stars their watch will keep,
And kiss the dark from Freedom's crest—
Beloved of all that love the best!

BATTLE FLOWERS

[In the Tower, London, are preserved the arms and trophies taken by England in all her wars. These weapons have been arranged on the wall artistically, to represent various flowers.]

In London's old historic Tower,
  Gloomed with a mighty story,
Hangs many a gorgeous battle flower,
  Wrought of a nation's glory;—
Lances and arrows, swords and shields,—
The spoils of a thousand splendid fields,
  Reeking and grim and gory!

Each pretty bloom the schoolgirl twines
  In her brown hair's fragrant cluster,

In that dim hall of England shines
With a weird and awful lustre;—
Roses and pansies, daisies fair,
Enwreathed for the spirits gathering there,
In the grim Valhalla's muster.

Ah, none may smile at the quaint conceit,
And the deep thought lying under,
For we hear the drums to battle beat,
And the storm of battle thunder
Raining its crimson on the sward
Where the dewdipped flowers afterward
Look up with a smile of wonder.

Nature embroiders all her graves;—
And the storm will roll in silver waves
From a sky all blue and vernal:—
Passion and folly and pain may still
But wound us and rend us, and wreak their will,
To crown us with wreaths supernal!

BATTLE DAWN

Though Spring is weaving a coronal
For the brow of the risen year,
Of the sweet-faced flowers, pleading all
For the flight of wrath and fear,
The violet's blue and lily's white,
And the tremulous crests of gold,
Are lost in a blaze of crimson light,
And their story is left untold.

By the wistful sunset's lingering ray,
And the torch of the morning star,
And the glow of the bright full-blossomed day,
We are reading the creeds of war,
And arming for battle, as nations born
In the dusk of battle must,
And flash from their sheaths the swords that scorn
The stain of ignoble rust.

From the fairest of all the Antilles
We heard a voice of woe,
The saddest of all sad Niobes,
Wailing and stricken low;
And had answered her, but awaited yet
The relentless Spaniard's nod,
With our ears for Europe's approval set,
But deaf to the living God.

Again from the purple Mexic sea
Came a deeper, stronger wail,
And a ship that upbore our standard free
Went down in her shattered mail;
And again God called, through the lips of the dead,
And the blood of that murdered crew
Was aflame in our banner's martial red,
And the stars in its field of blue!

The lily of peace is fair, serene,
A beautiful vestal flower,
But ever beloved the best, I ween,
After battle's crimson shower.

For a nation born in battle still
  Is pledged to all holy wars,
And must rise when the calls to conflict thrill
  From the stricken shield of Mars.

"Remember the Alamo!" was heard
  On proud San Jacinto's day,
And "Remember the Maine!" will be the word
  In the storm of the coming fray;
And, come what may, let us face the gale,
  And bright may our beacons burn
As we follow our flag through the iron hail
  Till the stars of peace return.

Miscellaneous

THE WRECK OF THE WRIGHT

[The "W. S. Wright," lost in Nookka Sound]

The sun has set, and all alone
  The steamer battles with the sea;
Her plume of smoke is backward blown,
Beneath her prow, with bodeful moan,
  The conquering wave bends sullenly,
While, chill and drear, a shadow creeps
Along the wild and misty deeps
  That roll a-windward and a-lee.

With maniac laughter, deep and low,
  The coiling waters mock her way;
A pallid sea-bird wheeling slow
Shrieks to his mother sea below
  The hopeless flight of human prey!
And o'er the rolling desert broods
The dreariest of Nature's moods,
  Bereft of all save bleak dismay.

A sudden blenching strikes the sea
  To windward, and the fearful twang
Of Neptune's trident hums a glee
Of might and wrath and agony.
  For where the breakers boom and clang,

Like flying shrouds from rifled graves,
The rended foam drifts on the waves
Whence ocean's slumbering furies sprang.

Into the jewelled arms of Night
The mad storm leaps, his vap'ry hair
Drifts o'er her queenly breast bedight,
And quenches all its gemmy light;
While down the corridors of air,
'Mong tapestries of cloud, the moon
Flits by with white, seared face, and soon
Night and the storm hold empire there!

The stricken billows leap away
With trampling thunders in the gale,
And staggering blindly to the fray,
The strong ship starts each bolt and stay;
Her cordage shrieks, and with a wail
She plunges downward in the gloom
Of roaring gorges, hoarse with doom,
And none alive may tell the tale.

What thoughts there came of home and friends;
What prayers were said; what kisses thrown,
Were lost upon the wind that lends
Its borrowed wrath no more, yet blends
A sigh of trouble with the moan
That sadly haunts the restless waves,
Forever rolling o'er the caves,
Where richer things than pearls are strewn.

They sailed one day, and came no more!
All else is wrapped in mystery;
The surges kneel upon the shore
And tell their sorrows o'er and o'er —
And still above the Northern sea,
A pensive spirit, pale and slow,
The gray gull, wheeling to and fro,
Keeps watch and ward eternally.

QUO ME, BACCHE?

Whither, O roving, rosy god,
Still young as the morning star,—
Whither, o'er weird, wild lands untrod
Dost thou bear me afar?

Long since thy bright ambrosial mates,
Swept hence by ruthless wings,
Have slipped within the misty gates
Where Fable sits and sings;

But lo, thine ivy fillet gleams
With emerald lustre yet;
Along life's path of deeds and dreams
Thy countless shrines are set.

A wider empire now is thine
Than when, in storied days,
Wandering from Hera's wrath divine,
The old world sang thy praise.

Bœotia and swart India thrilled
With fateful frenzy then;—
But thy libations, richly spilled,
Now stain all deeds of men.

Drawn by thy stealthy, spotted pards,
Thy chariot onward rolls;
No staying hand of fate retards
The doom of shrieking souls;—

A mystery of threaded gold
Upon thy shoulders bare,
And fraught with magic snares untold,
Still streams thy shining hair.

A mist of dreams is in thine eyes
Of wistful violet,
And on thy brow of high emprise
Beauty and pride are met.

"Hail to the god!" the nations cry,
And quaff the blushing curse;
Young Hope, black veiled, goes sadly by—
Hearts droop in paths perverse.

Thy gift to Midas still remains,
Fair god, the type of all
That we receive, who in thy chains
Shall give our will in thrall.

But no Pactolian waters roll
To heal our rending pain;

Onward, with hopeless death the goal,
We drag the length'ning chain,—

Praying the touch of the spectre pale
May be our seal of rest,—
Deaf to the Furies' angry hail,—
Asleep on our mother's breast.

With sensuous song and warm caress,
Thy nymphs our youth beguiled,
As o'er their snowy loveliness
Floated their tresses wild.

The glowing roses, sprent with dew,
Their rich, red lips outvied—
What wonder that as bright hours flew
Ambition drooped and died.

The purple glory of the grape
Suffused the captive heart;
From love's white arms who would escape,
Or bid such joys depart?

Now howling Mænads round us throng
With dank, dishevelled hair—
No more glad laughter, jest and song,
Banish the thought of care.

As in mad midnights known of old,
On the Muses' sacred peak,

Crazed girls their torch-lit orgies hold
With many a ringing shriek.

So, Bacchus, whither dost thou bear
What still is left of me,—
Down to the valley of Despair,
Down to the wailing sea?

Trailing her robes of red and gold,
Sweet Autumn rustles past;—
Still the wreathed thyrsus must I hold,—
No rescue come at last?

THE GORGE OF AVERNUS

I have banished the spectre of sorrow,
And conquered the dragon of drink;
I have torn a blank leaf from the morrow,
And fled from the Stygian brink.

There is death in the dew of the roses
That bloom in the blushes of wine;
There is danger where pleasure reposes,
Though we call her a goddess divine.

For I lingered too long—her caresses
Enslaved me, I could not depart;
And the shimmering gold of her tresses
Entangled my spirit and heart.

To the gorge of Avernus, a valley
  Of lilies and violets, leads
Where the doomed, that are garlanded daily,
  Beguiled by the nymphs of the meads;

Warm Nymphs with bosoms upswelling
  And kissed by the passionate sun,
Till the riotous blood is past quelling
  And the souls of the victims are won.

Bacchantes they are, and dissemble;
  With wine-moistened lips they entreat,
The flowers around them a-tremble
  With murmurs ambrosial sweet.

But wild are the nights that come after,
  When the vale of delusion is crossed,
And their tresses are blown and their laughter
  Is bleak with the wail of the lost.

Yet swifter and wilder are woven
  The bacchanal dances of doom,
Till the clew of the lab'rinth is cloven
  And their torches go out in the gloom.

Ah, then there is madness, the terror
  Of joys that are crushed, and regret,
And the feverish phantoms of error
  That ever the conscience beset.

The dead are the guests of the living—
  The beautiful hopes that were slain,

With never a smile of forgiving,
Come thronging when pleading in vain.

* * * * *

And yet I have conquered the dragon,
The spectres Plutonian have flown,
And the horror enshrined in the flagon
Has left me in freedom—alone!

To garnish the tombs of the perished,
The dead singing songs of the dead,
Of all the bright dreams that I cherished
This only is left me instead.

But lo, in this pathway of duty,
To the past, I, at least, can be true,
And the mists that bedream it with beauty
Some long withered flow'r may renew.

THE OLD NEWSPAPER

The past rolled back like a rainbowed vapor,
As you read again the old newspaper,
Found to-day
In the must and dust of the garret's lumber,
Where the spiders weave their dreams of slumber
And still decay.

Faded, and frayed, and dearly olden,
Its thoughts are sainted, its speech is golden,
Prose and rhyme;

As it wakes again, like a Rip Van Winkle,
With a heritage of rag and wrinkle,
The jest of Time.

As soft as the tress of the bashful maiden,
You stole one day when the tress was laden
With tasselled bloom,
It seemeth now, and your touch is tender,
Tender as love, for the thread is slender
That stays its doom.

As brown as the leaf of the last October,
Its smiles are tears and its wit is sober
In later days;
As the fountain, that springs with a laugh of bubbles,
Is hushed in the sweep of wider troubles
Of creeks and bays.

Whispers sweet as the dry-lipped flowers,
Uttered in lonesome autumn bowers,
When the birds have flown,
Are faintly breathed by these withered pages,
That knew the language of roseate ages,
Once your own.

And wistful shadows now delay on
The sportive freaks of its fleeting crayon,
Faded so—
And yet so sure in the fond recalling
Of the dear bygones into Lethe falling,
Long ago.

Comings and goings, wedding and dying,
Week-day traffic, and rumors flying
Round the marts—
In the mezzotint of the types reflected
In the long, low light of the years perfected
Reach our heart.

Flemish pictures of love and labor,
Friendly chat with the next door neighbor,
Helpful words
In the wayside rests of the path of duty,
And a gentle pride in the fruitful beauty
Of fields and herds.

Only an artless shepherd piping
In the woodland ways when the wheat was riping
In country barn,
It was glad, withal, to get its guerdon
Of corn and wine, as it bore the burden
Of city's scorn.

Fireside pleasures and household graces,
Were here enshrined, and the moon's wild phases
Aptly told;
And still, as the plot began to thicken,
Stalked forth again the tragic chicken
With legs three-fold.

NEPENTHE

On the wistful glance of the dying day
The sunset fringes droop,
While the moon is binding her locks astray
In a shimmering silver loop;
And I muse where the shadows of bloomy trees
Are aslant on the rippled clover,
As the robin sings vesper melodies
A hundred sweet times over.

The infinite sorrow of parting lies,
O Earth, on thy jewelled breast—
On waves and woods and each wing that plies
So wearily home for rest.
Down the long, long lines of gray and gold,
The dusk and the daylight meeting,
Say something the poets have left untold
In the lull of good-night and greeting.

For side by side with the wimpled shade,
The regretful sunlight moves
To a fleeting tryst in the fragrant glade,
And the silence of trophied groves;
While the waiting flowers, one by one,
Are touched with a passing glory,
As sad and as sweet as all love has known
In the lapse of its changing story.

But the song is shoaling to silence now,
And the plaintive day to dark,
And the light's last roses wreathe the prow
Of the twilight's fading bark—
While the heart is hushed by the lingering thrill
Of a joy that is nearly sorrow,
And a woe all sweet with the hopes that fill
The pallid unrisen morrow.

So furl thy banners, O castled West,
Let the rivers run blue and cold,
And the world be wan, if our souls have guessed
The secret the waves unfold
As they whisper low to the girdling shore,
When the day and the dusk are braided—
"The divinest pleasures arise and soar
On wings that are sorrow-shaded."

THEY ARE SINGING THAT SONG TO-NIGHT

Through curtains of crimsoning damask
And a silvery vapor of lace,
The light of a beautiful parlor
Shone out on a desolate face,
Where a wandering outcast had lingered,
Alone in the shadowy street,
As the strains of a song he remembered
Arose in a harmony sweet.

It was late, and so lonesome—the starlight
Seemed to flicker and fade in the sky,

And the whimsical wind like a spirit,
Stole past with a penitent sigh;
But the light and the music, and fragrance
Of the days that had faded from sight
Had returned as he listened—and whispered,
"They are singing that song to-night."

It is Clara that wakes the piano,
With Charley and May at her side,
And their voices, in harmony rising,
Flow on like a rhythmical tide;
But our mother, though listening sedately,
Turns softly away from the light,
And I know she has heard some one moaning,
"They are singing that song to-night."

The lamp-light still streams in the darkness,
And the hearts of the singers are high,—
It is little they dream, in their gladness,
That the phantom of sorrow is nigh,—
That a soul is astray on their chorus
In a shallop of shining delight,
And a fugitive weeps at the gateway—
"They are singing that song to-night."

Oh still may our wandering foot-steps
Resound in the hearts that we love,
When the fireside is curtained against us,
And the stars glimmer coldly above,
And the angels of music still wander,
From homes that are fragrant and bright

To caress the despondent and murmur,
"They are singing that song to-night,"
In the beautiful home of affection,
"They are singing that song to-night."

NOW, TRULY, WILL IT PAY?

To Youth

This life is but a river broad,
Fed by unnumbered streams,
And o'er its bosom pause and pass
Dark shades and sunny gleams.
And as through shine and gloom we go
Upon our winding way
The question oft runs through our minds,
"Now, truly, will it pay?"

Of course, it comes in later years
When rainbowed youth is o'er,
And visions sweet no longer wave
Bright signals from the shore;
When brows are clouded, hearts are cold
And love has flown away,
'Tis then, all wiser grown, we ask
"Now, truly, will it pay?"

It is a hard and worldly phrase
We learn from life's defeats,
From trysts with sorrow and the woe
Of Hope's forlorn defeats;

We dread the thorn beneath the rose,
The moan in mirth's loud lay,
And in cold accents we inquire,
"Now, truly, will it pay?"

It is not of the minted gold
Of acres broad, or power,
Nor any chaplet, howe'er fair,
That withers in an hour,
But of the guerdons Duty brings
To crown each closing day
That we, with heads bowed low, should ask,
"Now, truly, will it pay?"

In every venture time affords,
Of love or war or gain,
We only hear the siren's song
And not its sad refrain:—
The purple clusters hang so low
We pluck without delay,
And not a moment pause to ask,
"Now, truly, will it pay?"

To flaming passion toss the rein,
A thousand pleasures call
With rosy lips, and 'tis for thee
To taste the sweets of all;
But o'er a lone, forgotten grave,
On some near future day,
The mournful midnight winds will moan,
"Ah no, it did not pay."

TURNED DOWN

"My name is John, but they call me Jack,"
Cried a grizzled man in his grim distress,
And I've been such a fool from a time way back
That they might have added the "A" double "S."

I came to this country so long ago
That the hills seem wrinkled and bent and old,
And the sunrise comes with a rough-like glow,
While the pines sing wheezy and strange and cold.

I have lived on coons and pertaters, son,
And biled wheat straight was a feast for kings,
Though there's plenty that eat it too underdone,
And were busted and blowed into fiddle strings.

Ah, them was the times of the mountain trails,
And the fords and foot-logs to cross the streams,
As we courted, fit Injuns and made fir rails,
And were happy as folks in the poet's dreams.

But let that pass—I will leave the tale
For them folks to tell that don't wear scars,
How we conquered and over the wood and vale
The church steeples shone like the mornin' stars.

I was slicker than grease in the politics
Of them rollickin', rough-and-tumble days,

For the game that was played had few of the tricks
That tangle it now in a cunning maze.

From road supervisor and 'squire and judge,
And back and over the road again
I careered as I pleased, and without a smudge
Of the scandals that leave a ranklin' stain.

I made it my business, and liked it, too,
To always be pullin' for office, like,
And stand to be counted as good as new,
And waitin' and waitin' for lightnin' to strike.

For I thought they'd get used to me then, you know,
And feel sort o' lonesome without me 'round
In some sort of office, high or low,
Till my title was proved and fixed and sound.

And I reckoned a time would come at last
When a true old-timer would be king pin,
And corral the best trumps when, thick and fast
The burdens of office came a-rollin' in.

I believed when Cleveland had come to rule
That I, who had trained and was in good trim
And could hold down an office as big as a mule,
Would be the right citizen, see, for him.

And I am, for I ain't been promoted yet,
And I'll tell you square and upon my soul

There's a young fellow in, where I trusted to get,
And he don't know Hood from a ground squirrel's hole!

He never fit Injuns or split out a rail
Or eat coons and taters in pioneer days,
When we had to foller a derned hard trail
For to hustle 'em, son, without much praise.

His newness is awful, but I'm turned down,
And that's the small-pox that kerflummixed me;
The republic's ungrateful and I'll leave town
And sort o' hang round the old ranch, see?

ENVOY

Take the coon skin down from the storm-stained door
Of the useless past, for its day is done,
For the raw young tenderfoot's got the floor
And turned down the man that has had his fun.

DISILLUSION

In the golden tents of morning
We were camped upon the plain
When the bugles wafted warning
From the mountain to the main;
But our hearts were all undaunted—
Forth to win the accolade,
All our splendid legions flaunted
Beautiful in plume and braid.

Over violets and daisies
  Swept the storm of silk and steel,
On the pansies' pleading faces
  Beat the charger's iron heel:
Who would halt and who would waver
  On the crimson fields of doom
While he wore his lady's favor
  In the shadow of his plume?

So we won the bannered castles
  Of the blue enchanted hills,
But, alas, we are the vassals
  Of a fate that now fulfils;
For the purple veil has lifted,
  All the crags are cold and gray,
And the golden mists have drifted
  Backward o'er the trodden way.

Sheath the sword and fold the banner,
  Hide the wounds of heart and brow,—
We are older, wiser, wanner,
  Shadows shall not mock us now;
Give the fickle maid her favor,
  Love's a glamour with the rest,
And our hearts are calmer, braver
  When we lightly pass the jest.

Sheathe the sword and fold the banner,
  Faith has faded, hope is slain;
Sheathe the sword and fold the banner,
  Give the weary steed the rein;

All the shadows, eastward wheeling,
Lead us downward to the sea,
And a welcome bark is stealing
Out to dim eternity.

BY THE FIRESIDE

And though the soaring, sea-loved moon
Shine not upon the valley,
The stars along the dusky fields
Have made a golden rally;
Yet, darling, draw the curtain close
Against the frosty glory,
The firelight blossoms on the wall,
The rosy sparkles flash and fall
Upon the hearth before me.

I think of other Christmas eves
And sweet familiar faces,
Long gone, but never, never lost,
E'en to these shady places;
Star-white and glancing like a ray,
The hand of recollection
Waves o'er the twilight of my dreams
And wakes the bygone groups and scenes
In lovely resurrection.

Here in the gloom of evil days,
While clouds go o'er us trailing,

The silver gaps that mem'ry cleaves
  Still keep our hearts from failing;
And thus to pass our Christmas eve,
  What better than recalling
A dream of friendly hearts and hands
To shine along the shadow lands
  While rosy sparks are falling!

Ah, in that sainted long ago!
  Who is there but remembers
The dim, expectant stocking hung
  Above the dozing embers;—
The rush and revel of the morn
  When wildly bent on pillage,
We dragged the glorious booty out
With shrill hurrah and reckless shout
  As troopers sack a village!

And other joys of later time
  Bloom in the bright perspective,
And lift the grace of fragrant hours
  O'er mind and heart reflective;—
The glowing passion of the night
  Above our sleigh-steeds flying
O'er frosted vales, through sparkling dells,
'Mid crystal gleams, and tuneful bells,
  Where brilliant snows are lying.

The angel of good-will that sat
  Beneath the tree paternal

Comes back all odorous of truth
And purity supernal;
Shine on, shine on, O prophet star,
Beloved of sacred story!
Our land is bright with Christian love
It mingles with thy ray above
And fills its perfect glory!

In Memoriam

AN OREGON PIONEER

Eighty years of sun and shadow,
  Eighty years of smiles and tears!
And we only pause and wonder
  In our swift and short careers;
Eighty years of love and duty,
  Eighty years of hopes and dreams,
And the chaplet they have woven
  On thy meek brow softly gleams.

On this height of time triumphant
  Thou canst see the promised land,
And the long path of thy journey,
  Guided by the Father's hand;
In the tender dusk of gloaming
  Lingering morning's golden rose,
While through falling, fading vespers,
  Morning music gently flows.

In thy bosom's sweet affections
  Still exhales a fresh perfume,
And thou smil'st at youthful ardor,
  Grateful for its summer bloom;

For in true hearts, wistful yearnings
Never wholly pass away,
And the children of remembrance
Never wander far astray.

Cherished, honored, slowly passing
To the dim and mystic shore,
Loving life, yet blandly listening
For the silent boatman's oar,
Surely is the day worth living
Whose bright evening is so calm,
Hope and memory incense bringing
From the shores of bloom and balm.

Hear the gray sea, throbbing, singing
Songs thy sailor loved so well,
Mingled requiem and pæan,
And no doubt with thee can dwell
That, with signals set to welcome
Thee to guerdon and to rest,
Still his spirit barque is waiting
Near the islands of the blest.

THE NYMPHS OF THE CASCADES

[Dedicated to the memory of George E. Strong, a brilliant young journalist, formerly of the Oregonian staff, who, imagining that he heard beautiful strains of music and sweet voices calling him, wandered away from a camp in the Cascade Mountains while his companions were sleeping and was utterly lost, no trace of him, dead or alive, having ever been found.]

The campfire, like a red night rose,
  Blossomed beneath a gloomy fir
When weary men, in deep repose,
  Heard not the gentle night wind stir
Her priestly robes high overhead,
  Heard not the wild brook's wailing song
Nor any nameless sounds of dread
  Which to the midnight woods belong.

The moon sailed on, a golden bark
  Astray in lilied purple seas,
While forest shadows, weirdly dark,
  Were peopled with all mysteries;
And all was wild and drear and strange
  Around that lonely bivouac,
Where mountains, rising range on range,
  Shouldered the march of progress back.

The red fire's fluttering tongues of flame
  Whispered to brooding darkness there,
While spectral shapes without a name
  Were hovering in the haunted air;

And from the fir tree's inner shade,
A drear owl, sobbing forth his rune,
Kept watch, and mournful homage paid
At intervals unto the moon.

The travellers dreamed on serene,
Save one alone, whose brow, curl-swept,
Was damp from agony within;
Who tossed and murmured as he slept.
The fitful firelight on his face
Wavered and danced in elfin play,
Where all of youth's enchanting grace
As light as dreams upon him lay.

The glamour of the rosy light
The heavy lines of care concealed,
And trembling shadows of the night
Beyond him, like sad spirits, kneeled;
For his had been the lustrous gift
Of genius, lent by God to few,
The splendid jewel wrought by swift
Angelic art of fire and dew.

But like the pearl of Egypt's queen,
'Twas drowned in Pleasure's crimson cup,
And lo, its amethystine sheen,
In baleful vapors curling up,
Soon wreathed his brain in that dark spell
That has no kindred seal of woe,
As phantoms, that in Orcus dwell,
In mystic dance swept to and fro.

Swept to and fro and maddened him
With gestures wild and taunts and jeers,
And waved the withered chaplets dim
That he had worn in flowery years;
His spirit furled its shining wings,
Never again to sing and soar,
And wove all wild imaginings
In shapes of horror evermore.

The sleeper started, raised his head,
Upon his elbow leaned awhile,
And gazed where deepest night o'erspread,
With wistful eyes and brightening smile.
"I hear sweet music far away
The mountain nymphs are calling me!"
He murmured. "How divine a lay,
O soul of mine, is wooing thee!"

"Coming!" he whispered and arose,
And gropingly reached forth a hand,
As if another's to enclose,
Some ghostly guidance to command—
And lo! into the heavy night,
As led by forms unseen, he fled
Far from the waning firelight
Into the canyons dark and dread.

'Twas years ago, but trace or track
Of him has never yet been found,
For Echo only answered back

The hunter's call and baying hound;
Forever lost, untract, unseen,
A shadow now among the shades.

From some snow-wreathed and shining peak
His soul swam starward long ago,
And now no more we vainly seek
The secret of his fate to know;
While fires of sunset and of dawn
Flame red and fade on many a height,
The mystery will not be withdrawn
From him, long lost from human sight.

And yet I sometimes sit and dream
Of him, my schoolmate and my friend,
As wand'ring where bright waters gleam,
In some sweet life that has no end—
Within the Cascades' inner walls,
Where nymphs, beyond all fancy fair,
Soothe him with siren madrigals,
And deck him with their golden hair.

"ALLIE"

To My Sister

"Come to thy rest," the angel said,
In fadeless bloom and beauty—
"Come to thy rest"—the weary head
Drooped by the path of duty.

The golden stars still rise and fall,
  Forgetful of our weeping,
But yet we know, above them all,
  That angel watch is keeping.

And when the flowers of Spring return,
  That glimpse the heavens clearly,
Oh, how our aching hearts will yearn
  For thee, that loved them dearly.

No sweeter flower than thee can bloom
  On this dark shore of sorrow—
Bid us good-night, in tearful gloom,
  And garland Death's to-morrow.

SLAIN BY THE SEA

[A tribute to Hugh Todd Bingham, drowned at Long Beach, Washington.]

The halcyon summer sky is bent
  Benignly over the sea and shore
While Ceres, within her purple tent,
  On a gleaming throne of her sheaves in store
Is wreathed with red poppies and golden wheat;
And a-dream in the joy of triumph sweet.

And high on the smoky mountain wall
  In her crystal temple peace is throned;
By a thousand rainbowed waterfalls
  Are the songs of her saintly calm intoned,

When with drooping crests the imperial firs
Are silent mysterious worshippers.

By the tawny field, where the keen scythe swept,
  The silvery musical rivers flow
Down to the sea-tryst they have kept
  Since the bridal morning long ago,
When the bold brown shore and the azure sea
Were wedded with fateful mystery.

While with rich fruition spent and prone,
  And all of her garlanded nymphs a-swoon,
So rests the earth with her trophies strewn
  In the glow of the beautiful harvest moon;
Serene in her gold and azure veil,
As the sweet days bourgeon and bloom and fail.

But for me a tristful shadow lies,
  On the sheen of this glory of wealth and peace,
For never a voice that is lost replies,
  Though the call of my spirit will not cease,
And I hear the trees and the tasselled grass
Full many a whispered secret pass.

For the golden pomp and the bright parade
  Of the harvest time are remote and pale,
And with silence over my spirit laid
  My heart hears only the ocean's wail
As it lifts in the moonlight, weird and cold,
The form and the face I shall ne'er behold.

On many a summer night like these,
When the wistful sky was a-bloom with stars,
Have we talked of the manifold mysteries
In the region beyond life's dusky bars;
But now he knows: he has passed the gate
That leads to the further fields of Fate.

And alas! when I go to muse alone
And to question the mystical stars of night,
Will a quivering ray on my path be thrown
By a soul that has drunk of the chalice of light,
And from some star oriel, far and clear,
Will he lean and greet me with hope and cheer?

By mortality veiled and deluded, lo
We grope in the light and we cannot see
The phantoms around, and the tides that flow
In harmonious currents, swift and free,
From this island of wreck, that men call time,
To the infinite shores of the light sublime.

But looking along my own life's way,
Be it long or short, in the weary trend,
In sunshine or shadow, come what may
I shall never behold my unfailing friend,
But forever, along the plaintive shore,
Hear the sorrowful burden, no more! no more!

The murmuring spring and the perfumed shade
Of a glad green isle in the desert sands
Was his friendship ever to me displayed

In my life's wild need of hearts and hands,
And I think of him now, as a knighted soul,
Gone out to the gleam of a higher goal.

Let the wild waves moan as they kiss the dead,
And the white birds wheel, in forlorn unrest,
In the mournful midnights, or when the red,
Swift torch of the morn lights the ocean's breast
From elysian vales, from some blest star
His spirit looks down on the sad sea's war.

For a little while, with tender awe,
As the querulous days go on and on,
Shall I nearer and nearer the strange bourne draw,
And nearer and nearer the shadowless dawn,
And so with its white light on my brow,
May I grasp the hand that is beckoning now!

THE CROWNING OF BURNS

Though winter's crystal helmet gleams
In her gray and sombre sky,
And her storied vales and haunted streams
In a mist of silence lie,
There's a matchless wreath on Scotia's brow,
For to-night with her the nations bow
To a name that cannot die.

That wreath her peasant poet wove,
Of the daisies of the sod,
And the fresh, wild blooms of glen and grove

Where he wandered like a god,
And left by many a brook and tree,
Some garland fair of minstrelsy,
To endear the paths he trod.

How well proud Scotia keeps her tryst,
With a lover fond and true,
While the pale, sad skies turn amethyst
And the bræs their bloom renew;
For the woodland ways are bright and long
In the fadeless summer of his song
Besprent with freshest dew.

To her the chaplet of his fame
Is more than her splendid shield
And the trophies won in battle's flame
On many a stubborn field;
For he, though the wayward troubadour
Of the plaintive annals of the poor,
The wealth of her soul revealed.

A sweeter, truer Virgil, he
On the breast of nature leaned,
And listened and sang, as fond and free
As a thrush by myrtle screened,
While the glowing passion of his tone
Seemed to make the pulse of earth his own,
And no shadows intervened.

His was no cold, unbodied voice;
But rich, with a human thrill;
He could with his ingle-mates rejoice,

When the winds without were chill;
And then to the cotter's fireside come,
And sing of the holy shrine of home,
With a charm that soothes us still.

His songs of love, in glow and grace,
Are fragrant of asphodel,
And flowering fancies interlace
In the fairy glades where dwell
His Jeans and Marys, so vivid yet,
That a scent of rose and violet
Makes the heart responsive swell.

The halcyon age must linger still
Where a young god strays and sings,
With its fanes on every purple hill,
And nymphs at the sacred springs,
While his Bonnie Doon and gentle Ayr
The subtle beauty forever wear
Of his rapt imaginings.

He grandly sang for human right
And the brotherhood of all,
Sublimely hopeful of manhood's fight,
He sounded his bugle-call.
And for Caledonia's sons his words
Had the angry flash of patriot swords
That lighten the battle's pall.

O poet of beauty, love and truth,
Accept of this poor wreath of ours,

So pale in the lustrous glow of youth
That enchants thy fadeless bowers;
For the world is round thy shrine to-night,
While thy genius made the journey bright,
And golden the votive flowers.

BURNS

[Written in commemoration of the 132d anniversary of the poet's birth, January 25th.]

The poet of immortal youth
We celebrate to-day,
Whose soul flashed diamond rays of truth
That never fade away.

A star will sometimes fail to shine,
Its brilliancy grows dim,
Yet still we find the "ploughman's shrine"
And fondly worship him;

The vestal virgin's lamp has failed
Where Greece and Rome held sway,
But "Bobbie's" genius has not paled,
It lights the world to-day.

At times his poverty would sting
Until he broke the ban,
Then how his magic harp would ring
The royal rights of man!

As April clouds will gloom and pass,
The golden sun return;
He loved too well the wassail glass,
But genius still would burn:

"O Willie brew'd a peck o' maut
And Rob and Allan came to pree—
Three blither hearts, that lee-lang night,
Ye wad na find in Christendie.

"We are na fou, we're na that fou,
But just a drappie in our e'e;
The cock may craw, the day may daw,
And aye we'll taste the barley-bree."

A glad and fearless bard was he,
To all things true was leal,
And yet with all his jollity
He ne'er forgot the "Diel."

"An' now, auld Cloots, I ken ye're thinkin',
A certain Bardie's rantin', drinkin',
Some luckless hour will send him linkin'
To your black pit;
But, faith! he'll turn the corner jinkin',
An' cheat you yet."

Poor "mousie," turned from house and hame
By that immortal plough,
The poet's true heart overcame
And wreathed with shade his brow.

"Still thou art blest, compar'd wi' me!
The present only toucheth thee:
But, Och! I backward cast my e'e
On prospects drear!
An' forward, tho' I canna see,
I guess an' fear!"

"Despondency" is chill with gloom,
We turn in bleak despair,
And cheerfulness will burst in bloom
At "Holy Willie's Prayer."

In Amphitrite's sacred grove
He knew the font and fane,
And all the witchery of love
Is wrought in many a strain.

"Auld Nature swears, the lovely dears
Her noblest work she classes, O;
Her 'prentice han' she tried on man,
An' then she made the lasses, O.

"Green grow the rashes, O;
Green grow the rashes, O;
The sweetest hours that e'er I spend
Are spent amang the lasses, O!"

And while these Winter days endure
And winds and rain abide,
We cannot but remember sure
Bold Tam O'Shanter's ride.

To death that glorious name and fame
We shall not now resign—
Meeting and parting never came
But echoed "Auld Lang Syne."

While "banks and braes" with birds and bees
And summer flow'rs are sweet,
And limpid waves kissed by the breeze
Caress the wood-nymph's feet.

We never shall forget the songs,
(Such pow'r divine was given),
Of him who sang to angel throngs
Of "Mary," safe in Heaven!

THE DYING MINER

When the foot-prints of spring in the canyons were seen
And the flowers peeped shyly gray boulders between,
In a rude miner's cabin of far Idaho,
There was weeping in silence, and heart-breaking woe;

For a miner lay dying, and comrades were there,
So strong, yet so helpless with utter despair,
To find this one foe, that no valor could stay,
Who was bearing their bravest forever away.

It was evening, and sunset's long lances of gold
Trailed over the gulches, deserted of old,

As a sign and a token of treasure in store,
More precious than ever was gathered before.

The far mountains, kneeling in vestments of white,
Like pale priests were crowned with the beautiful light,
Which changed the worn pick, by the cabin door cast,
To a symbol of Christ and redemption at last.

But, within, the strong-hearted clasped hands round his bed,
As if but a murmur might sever the thread;
The silver cord that trembles in touch with its God
Who can crown with a blessing or smite with the rod.

The sunset was fading the ridges along,
A lone bird was closing a sorrowful song,
While shadows grew darker o'er the river ahead
And the mountains looked haggard and cold as the dead.

O'er the face of the dying a sudden light came
Like a ray out of heaven, so pure was its flame;
To the home of his childhood, his fond heart returned,
And the faces of dear ones his spirit discerned.

His last thought went back, ere his spirit was free,
To a low Kentish cottage far over the sea,

Where his father and mother, so early and late,
For the boys that had wandered kept watching the gate.

Then his brother bent over one last word to hear,
For he knew that the wash of the cold sea was near,
And he moaned, as his lips touched the mystical foam,
"Oh brother, take care of the old folks at home."

The bird ceased its singing, the sunset's last wreath
From the pale mountains faded—he lay still in death!
But in Idaho's placers, and choose as you will,
There was no truer gold than the heart that was still.

Let the winds waft it over the desolate sea
To the hearts of these loved ones, their comfort to be,
And chant round the cabins of others that roam,
"Oh brother, take care of the old folks at home."

And the stars that stand guard o'er the camp and the trail,
When the strong hearts grow weary and bold spirits fail,
Will signal aright from their watch in the dome
If they'll only take care of the old folks at home.

Life and Death

THE LEGEND OF LIFE

All the sweet stars sang and glittered,
In the radiant olden time,
Till the cup of life, embittered,
Flashed along their feasts sublime;
Then the chorus fell, yet ever,
Though they smiled through falling tears,
Like a far resplendent river
Ran the music of the spheres.

And the moon uprose serenely,
In that plaintive time of old,
While her mantle, lustrous, queenly,
Like a silver mist unrolled;
But her brow was pale and chilly,
All her beauty clasped the air,
And she wore the mystic lily
In the glory of her hair.

Then the crimson lips of morning
Kissed the world to life and light,
When the blue seas caught the warning
With a revel of delight;
While the bold peaks towered grandly
To the arches of the sky,

And the perfumed zephyrs blandly
  Waked the meadows with a sigh.

Birds in hues of floral splendor,
  Flamed and sang in tropic woods,
Tinted vapors, dim and tender,
  Wreathed the sky in lovely moods;
And the winding rivers, dreamy
  With the shadows that they bore,
Trailed their crystal robes and beamy,
  To the ocean's misted shore.

Gemmy lakelets lay enchanted
  In the glamour of the East,
Then the trees immortals planted
  Dropped a gold and purple feast;
As the yellow lion, sleeping
  In the hyacinthine shades,
Saw the fearless lambkins leaping
  Down the clover-scented glades.

White-limbed mortals, idly roving
  In elysian ecstasy,
Knew no duller task than loving,
  And were god-like, fair and free;
For their lives were but the summing
  Of the sweets the angels sip,
Drowsy as the brown bees, humming
  At the rose's fragrant lip.

'Twas the happy age, the golden,
Which the elder poets sang,
When their measures, rare and olden,
Up to heaven rose and rang;
But a north wind blew, the flower
Curled and withered in its breath,
While above the trysting bower
Ran the whisper—"Labor—death!"

Then the palm tree lisped no longer
Tales of love and peace benign,
For a music, braver, stronger,
Shook the plumage of the pine;
And the surges, shoreward bending,
Rolled the thunder of a prayer
That was half a pæan, blending
Battle, victory, and despair.

Yet the fair moon wandered nightly
In enameled fields of blue,
And the springing dawn still brightly
Showered rubies on the dew:
Phœbus still passed on and over,
Crowning earth with regal charms,
And caressed her, like a lover,
In the rose wreath of his arms.

But the bugle call of duty
Echoed down life's rocky stair,
While the world's receding beauty
Told of tempests in the air;

For the slow and strange uncoiling
Of the wondrous fate of man
In the dust and din of toiling,
In the rush of strife began.

On the clear, unspotted pages
Of the pearly book of mind,
Through the weary lapse of ages,
Shades of truth were dimly lined;
Words were blotted, phrases tangled,
But a transcript grew apace,
Like the features, O how mangled!
Of Jehovah's hidden face.

Genius spread her purple pinions
For a flight beyond the stars,
Valor called his fiery minions
To the wreck of savage wars;
And the sheen of cities, founded
By the rivers and the seas,
Marked the periods, grandly rounded
On the roll of destinies.

Many gods, with wild grimaces,
Led the faith of men astray—
Temples rose in sacred places
And their priests bore kingly sway;
While the keen sword, never sleeping,
In the twilight flashed and rang,
Where the stormy hosts, at reaping,
To a moon of scarlet sang.

Like a sail that glints in turning
  On the ocean's cloudy rim,
Hints of truth, a moment burning,
  Touched the spirit's border dim—
Touched and passed, and left the tremor
  Of a flitting sense of light
On the soul of sage or dreamer,
  Watching, listening, through the night.

Sweet as vesper bells, recalling
  Weariness to prayer and rest,
Were the words of wisdom falling
  From the lips the gods caressed;
For the minds of some, uplifted
  O'er the tumult of the years,
Through the vale of shadows, rifted,
  Caught the sunlight's levelled spears.

On prophetic temples visions
  Of redemption blossomed then,
And beyond the sword's decisions,
  Shone the star of peace again;
But the pall of superstition
  Hovered still o'er courts and camps,
And the seers in pale contrition,
  Stumbled on by misty lamps.

. . . . . .

'Tis a gala night with immortals above,
And sweet as the sigh of the woman you love
  Is the loitering breath of the breeze;

While the tresses of moonlight are drifted and blown
On the lips of the sea waves, subduing their moan,
And tangled in odorous trees.

Yet the stars, from their beautiful vases of pearl,
Besprinkle the earth with their bounty and whirl
In a scintillant laughter of light;
But the vale of Judea is waiting the crown
Of a kinglier splendor than stars shower down,
Or wreathe on the brow of the night.

The waters of Jordan salute as they pass
The flowers, that lean to the whispering grass,
With a crystalline tinkle of song;
And the olives kiss hands to the mystical palm,
The queen and the priestess of lustre and calm,
As the moments of jubilee throng.

O, fair as the bosoms of maidens, the hills
Heave soft in the ocean of rapture that fills
The domain of the prophets and kings;
And the shepherds, reclined on the blossomy swells,
Talk low as they listen to murmurous bells,
Or the bird that awakens and sings.

Is it dawn, that the stars are so wofully pale?
Is the daylight aflame in the shimmering veil
Of the pensive and lingering moon?
Ah, morn never rose, and the day never shone
With a glory like this, as if suddenly thrown
From the disc of some marvellous noon!

For the gates that the poets and psalmists have sung
At the nod of the Father have parted and swung,
And the planets are misted and cold,
As a flash from the Throne, an ineffable beam
Is an instant astray, and has left us a dream
Of sapphire and diamond and gold.

There's a step on the stair that the angels have trod,
And the Prince of the manger, our brother, our God,
Is the guest and the grace of us all;—
Our Captain in battle, the Rose and the Wreath
Of our life and our love, and our triumph when death
Shall trumpet the welcome recall.

O, Jesus of Nazareth, comfort us still,
For the pathway is dim and the tempest is chill,
While our sorrows thou only canst tell;
And the spheres never roam in the clear amethyst,
But they beckon and say thou wilt come to the tryst,
And we know that the rest will be well!

. . . . . .

Lo! the touch of Heaven, streaming
O'er the devious ways of Earth,
Left full many a beacon gleaming
On the altar and the hearth;
In the desert sparkled fountains
That were never known before,
While the cold and craggy mountains
A serener aspect wore.

Then the heavy tome of science
Slowly loosed its mighty maze,
And no longer bade defiance
To the pallid student's gaze;
On the canvas blushed the beauty
Which the soul of art doth keep,
And the sculptor's priestly duty
Woke the marble's snowy sleep.

Woe befell, and nations wandered
In the slimy sloughs and fens
While a wealth of hope was squandered
In Cimmerian glooms and glens;
But the goal of all endeavor,
Like a soaring shaft of flame,
Waved its golden crest forever
Till the peoples onward came.

And the ocean swung the censer
Of its worship evermore,
Though the days were darker, denser
Than the pagan nights of yore;
Then the graceful rivers, straying
In their shining scarfs of mist,
Sang of summer, and, delaying,
Meads and musky gardens kissed.

O, the woven lights and shadows
Of the rolling tide of Time!
Purple tents to-day, and meadows—
On the morrow cliffs to climb!

But the broad sun stands forever,
As the planets wheel and wheel,
And our fears depress us never
When the days at parting kneel.

Leaf by leaf, the stony record
Of the strata rises still,
And the life of man, so chequered,
Owns the same Eternal Will;
In the dust and blood and ashes
Of a thousand wild defeats,
Vict'ry springs, the spirit flashes,
And the pulse of courage beats.

Lo! the human mind advances
In the nimbus of her pride,
And within her starry glances
No delusion shall abide!
In the trackless depths of ether,
Roving worlds display her sign,
While to prisoned Truth, beneath her,
Patiently her ears incline.

Where the glaciers glow and glitter
Under plumy northern lights,
Fairies carve the gems that fit her,
In the long and wakeful nights—
Gems that flash in swift renewal
On the pallid brow of Art,—
But the stars have dropt a jewel
In the rose-bloom of the heart!

WRECK

At Sea

Lo the sea!—the bright, the sleeping
Spirit of the globe terrene,
While the light land breeze is sweeping
Musky sighs from gardens green;
O'er the shining leagues no wrinkle
Of the blue wave turns a twinkle
Of the moonlight's showered gold,
Though from many an astral quiver
Diamond arrows glint and shiver
O'er the waters still and cold.

Lo the sea!—the wild uplifting
Bosom of our mother world,
With the misty rev'ries drifting
O'er its waters, passion-whirled;
And the lone, brave ships, defying
All its moods, like stern thoughts, flying
O'er a tossed and trampled heart,
To the goal of some endeavor
Mists and seas would shield forever
On the mind's unrolling chart.

Lo the sea!—the billow-broken
Myst'ry of a planet's dream—
Waking with its thoughts half-spoken
When the tempests rush and scream—

Lulling all its voices dreary
When the north wind's wing is weary,
And the crested surges roll
To the sullen capes the story
Of the storm's unbridled glory,
And the distant church bells toll.

. . . . . .

In the distant and desolate wastes of the ocean,
Afar from the keel-fretted trails of the ships,
She lies still enough, after years of commotion;
Her sails kissing sand, and the rocks at her lips!
While the sea-bird may wheel o'er the mist of the breaker,
May wheel and may call, but it never can wake her
To toil and to tempest and danger again;
For the battle is over, the billows ride past
In the spume of the tempest, careering and vast—
And the wreck is a tale among sea-faring men.

While the sailors that sang as they lifted the anchor,
And loosed the white sails in the port far away,
They were gathered, O sea, to thy bosom, in rancor,
The spoil and the boast of the sorrowful fray!
For the tall masts are shattered—the deck slanting steeply
Will nevermore thrill to their footsteps, when deeply
The murmuring sea breathes the threat of the storm;
Nor the ropes fly in many a wind-tangled tress,
Which the mariner never shall coil nor caress
With the infinite grace of his nautical charm.

While the rolling and glimmering desert of water
Will dimple and laugh in the beautiful sun,
When the waves have forgotten the tempest that brought her
A wreck on the shore, and so sadly undone;
And the vessel of war and the sloop of the trader
Will shun the wild isle where the billows have laid her,
And pass and repass on imperial seas—
Will pass and repass, with a jocular hail,
And a song 'fore the mast, and a light on the sail,
As the wreck rots away in the sun and the breeze.

But the sea, in its madness, forever aspiring
To clasp the blue throne of the star-circled moon,
Will implore and implore, with an ardor untiring,
And kneel on the shore with a mystical rune;
And the crimson will foam in the goblet of morning,
The pledge, empyrean, of golden adorning,
As day in its crystalline beauty returns;
While the night will embroider the wave with her stars,
As she ripples a silvery truce o'er its wars
But the lamp of the widow will fade as it burns!

For alas! we remember the time of the launching,
How gaily the ship sought the arms of the sea!
And we look, and remember the faces, now blanching,
Were kindled with hope when her canvas shook free;
And we sigh as we think of the terrible ocean,

So sad and so strange, in its moods and its motion—
  Unequal in all that is given or withheld;
And we say that our ship was surprised in a squall,
That a timber was rotten—but know not at all
  How the trouble befell that the surges have
    knelled.

So the fleets sail away for their gold and their spices
  To islands of palm, and to gardens of pearl,
Or wherever the spirit of commerce entices
  A bold prow to push and a sail to unfurl,
And so what does it matter? We thrive altogether,
And earn what we win in fair or foul weather,
  With heaven above and the billow before;
And the heavens may frown and the billows may
    foam,
But the sailor will sing and the ship it will roam,
  Though a thousand wrecks lie on the rocky lee
    shore.

. . . . . .

On Shore

Lo the land!—upheaved in beauty,
  Carved in kingdoms and in isles,
And its rocky paths of duty
  Bordered fair with floral wiles!
In the sunshine lift the ridges,
O'er the torrents leap the bridges,
  And the rivers onward wind,
Like the singers, sweet and olden,

Who with harps and music golden
  Soothed the warrior's darksome mind.

Lo the land!—where men have builded
  Stately marts and jewelled homes,
Peasant huts and marbles gilded
  Clustering round cathedral domes;
On the anvil rings the hammer,
And the engine's muffled clamor
  Drowns the tinkling lute of love;
But the eagle, poised in ether,
Sees the smoky town beneath her,
  Dull and dingy from above.

Lo the land! the sun and shadow
  Checkering all our dreams of life—
Chasing rainbows o'er the meadow,
  Struggling up the hills of strife!
Love is long and life uncertain,
And the pale unpictured curtain
  We have known and named as death
Hides so much that might be spoken,
And the blue sky gives no token
  Of our dear one's vanished breath.

. . . . . .

It is, ah, such a night! that I darkly remember,
  While the resonant rain on the tenement roof
Is a monody pouring the dirge of December,
  With passionate bursts, as it wails, in reproof
  Of the sorrowful, sorrowful waifs and estrays—
In despair of the soul so reluctant at starting,

The ling'ring "good-night" on the threshold of
parting
That must be "good-morning" to happier days!

For a waif and estray, and a lonely soul passing
The valley and shadow, lies here at our feet,
While the thundering vapors of heaven are massing
To storm the night through with a whirlwind of
sleet;
While a door that is fitfully creaking somewhere
Is a voice of despair, and is saying, or seeming
To say, "Come away, for the tempest is streaming,
And tumult and freedom are kings of the air."

As a wasted and sperm-sheeted candle is burning,
A desolate watcher beside the low bed,
Where a curl-clustered brow is so restlessly turning,
And leans as to catch the strange words that are
said;
While the wavering shadows that crowd on the
wall,
And so silently beckon and bend as in greeting,
Are surely the dreams of his past, and are meeting
To witness that life is a shade after all!

In the dear long ago, other shadows are moving,
At night, on the beautiful wall of his home,
Where a guardian angel, untiring and loving,
Outwatches the flickering stars of the dome,
With her hand on his cradle the solemn night
through!

Other shadows than these the dim candle is flaring—
These beckoning spectres that sigh with despairing
That nothing we love is enduring and true!

Does he mutter her name, that his voice is so tender?
Ah, sweetheart, and friend, you're abandoned to-night!
He is back with his mother—good angels defend her!
Through all the dark years of misfortune and blight,
And we know, by that fluttering smile on his lips,
That his soft baby hands—like the Babe's of the Manger—
Is nestling again in her bosom from danger,
With prayer and faith in its warm finger-tips.

While that smile on his lips is the signet of slumber,
The soiled plumes of manhood are brightly upborne
By the blessed child-angel, and cares without number
Roll back from the spirit that lived but to mourn.
Let us kneel in the presence that hushes us all;
For the sceptre of deity, never discerning
The king from the clown, is so silently turning,
And touching our hearts with the gloom of the pall.
There is shame on this brow where the death-damp has rested,
The stray silver threads in the clusters of brown
Are the tokens of guilt—for the years had not crested

His life with the beautiful symbol and crown;
There is pathos in ev'ry sad wrinkle that lines
On this face the wild drama of hopeless endeavor—
A pathos so deep, when we think that "forever"
Is writ where the night dew in cold sorrow shines!

As we think of the dawn of his manhood and beauty,
The promise that bloomed in his spirit of fire;
And we look on him now when the clarion of duty
Shall nevermore wake him to chivalrous ire!
In the twilight and tangle of time's crooked ways,
He was destined to stumble, and lose the rich dower
Of youth and ambition, and hope at full flower,
And drift in the débris that taints and decays.

For alas, do we know, when the trumpet was calling,
How bravely he strove to stand up with the rest,
That a shadow of doom on his spirit was falling,
The shade of the sinister bar on his crest!
O, so many are borne from the wreck of life's field,
As the fruit of some wrong that the ages have hidden,
The taint of a household—the spectre unbidden
That brings the slain heir on his ancestors' shield!
For the mothers of Sparta are saying forever
The farewell that rings like the clashing of steel;
And "with it, or on it" are words that will quiver
On pale lips, and will till our bosoms congeal.
And so what shall we do, but go down to the fray

In the lustre of youth and glory of striving,
To die or to triumph, where fortune is driving
With thunder and smoke through the pitiless day!

WHAT DEATH MAY BE

"I have been half in love with easeful Death,
Called him soft names in many a mused rhyme."
—*Keats*

Asleep I was, and softly dreamed,
As shaded lamplight o'er me streamed,
And flowers, white and calm,
Wreathed on my silent bosom seemed
To steep my soul with balm.

I heard faint whispers, and a tear
Dropped on my forehead;—I could hear
A sobbing, far away,
And only those sweet flowers were near
That on my bosom lay.

I woke from that soft sleep of wonder,
Awoke to hear the grave clods thunder,
And knew not what it meant,
So calmly had I slumbered under
A fragrant silken tent.

But it was death! Oh, dark and deep
They made the chamber of that sleep,
And lying wakeful there,
I heard them gently round and heap
The mound of my despair.

That pallid, awful face above!
The face that once was lit with love—
O heaven that it should be,
That never one should come to move
This horrid mask from me!

Yet must I lie here shut from day
And bear the horror of decay
A noisome, ling'ring term—
Lie here (as angels weep and pray!)
And listen for the worm!

A VIEW OF DEATH

O Death, our familiar, unbidden guest,
Whose robe is silence, whose crown is rest;
Whose cities with mocking marbles gleam
And whose banners are pale as the weird moon's beam;
When Life came forth from his rose-wreathed gate,
Thou camest, his shadow and conquering mate;
And yet, with thy kingdom on land and sea,
Since the primæval curse left us frail but free,
Ah, what, after all, do we know of thee?

Alas, it is this, only this, we know:
That the musical fountain has ceased to flow,
And never again will its crimson stream

Flush the heart that is thrilled with Life's sweet
dream;
That the fane is deserted where young Hope knelt,
That the temple is dark where Affection dwelt,
And that fondly and vainly and ever with dread
We moan, as we murmur adieus to the dead.

To us, whatever the Psalmist saith,
The cold, still form is our view of death.
We only know that rest and night
Have come to a child of love and light,
That the magic windows the soul looked through
Are kissed and sealed with a Stygian dew—
That the frosted lips neither sigh nor smile—
But where have they gone—our beloved erstwhile?

Can the preacher tell us, in phrase serene?
Hath he looked behind that heavy screen?
We think, we know, we feel and see,
But who hath fathomed eternity?
The finite mind to the issue brought,
On the cloudy verge of that wrecking thought
Reels back in terror, from the gulf profound
Of space and duration it cannot sound.

Beyond the shimmer of earth-seen stars
Nowhere are there bounding walls or bars,
But a sea of space that soundless runs
Gold-misted with infinite stars and suns;
The thought is madness, the madness of dreams,
Where, astray amid haunted shores and streams,

The mind goes jangling, free and wild,
By many a horror strange beguiled.

Ah yes, we may stand and listen and think
By that shoreless sea, on its crumbling brink,
While its spray is chilling our trembling feet,
And believe that our loved ones we shall meet
Beyond, where silvery mists are curled
Round the gleaming shores of a better world;
But there comes no answer, yes or no,
From the vast realm whither the dead must go,
Though we plead through tears of helpless woe.

In the earthly sense we comprehend
That death, after all, is life's best friend—
Its food and renewal through flights of years,
When the beauty of youth ever reappears.
The body that lay all white and cold,
And tenderly laid in a cool brown mould.
Will return to existence as still Time flows,
And be drifted by every wind that blows;
Its atoms, released by Death's decree,
Will flush in the rose and toil with the bee,
And woven in diverse forms be found,
While fate weaves fate in a ceaseless round.

But what of the spirit, the life within,
After its battles with pain and sin?
Does the spirit return unidentified
To the primæval source, the eternal tide

Of spirit life that must traverse
The dusky deeps of the universe,—
And like the red blood in our veins
Keep life still thrilling with greater gains—
Still building and leaving and building anew
Through infinite ages and changes too?
If the soul be deathless, and if it be
A child of the realm of eternity,
Its remembrance of earth cannot be all
And sufficient to hold it forever in thrall,
But a dim and vanishing episode
To a traveller on a stormy road.

And so, my endeared ones, dead and gone,
As the shadows deepen and life grows lone,
I think of thee still, and more and more
Look forward and question the farther shore.
But I see no gleam of the beckoning hand,
No sweet voice calls me from amaranth land
Save the faint fond dreams we mortals weave
To brighten the gloom of hearts that grieve;
And I moan in anguish with head bowed low,
"I do not know, O, I do not know;"
Yet ever I feel it is well with thee
In Oblivion's shroud, by the crystal sea,
Or beginning another life afar,
A life that will grow from star to star,
While I, still held in a lower sphere,
Life's manifold tasks accomplished here,
Will trust the unknown, and the ebbing tide,
To lead me at last where my loved abide.